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SOME NEW LIGHT ON CHAUCER

Lectures delivered at the
Lowell Institute

By
JOHN MATTHEWS MANLY

GLOUCESTER, MASS.
PETER SMITH
1959

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To

GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE

As a slight token of obligations I
can never repay and of a friendship
which has lasted nearly forty years

PREFACE

This volume represents a course of eight lectures delivered before the Lowell Institute at Boston in February, 1924. My original intention was to publish the lectures at once without change, but the preparation of a list of references for the new material discussed delayed me until other duties which I could not neglect prevented all work on them for some time. Meanwhile new discoveries were being made, and although I could not deal with all of them without rewriting the text and changing its character from that of an informal discussion to that of a technical argument, I could not neglect those which corrected or confirmed the views originally set forth. Those who heard the lectures when delivered will, I think, testify that the new discoveries have not necessitated the cancellation of any important theory set forth in them but have in some instances

strongly confirmed views originally expressed very tentatively.

Two lectures which formed a part of the course do not appear in this volume: one on Chaucer's purpose in writing *Sir Thopas*, involving a somewhat new interpretation of that delightful skit; the other on the origin and nature of the Griselda story. They have been excluded for several reasons. In the first place, new material on the Canterbury Pilgrims left little space for them. Secondly, they are so different in subject and character from the other contents that it seemed best to reserve them for another occasion. Thirdly, the ideas on the Griselda story really belonged to my friend and former pupil Professor D. D. Griffith, who lent them to me for the occasion of the lectures, but will now, I hope, publish them himself. Finally, on a recent visit to Paris, Professor Rickert and I discovered certain unknown facts regarding the Griselda story which demand a fuller and a different treatment than can be given in this volume.

The facts just narrated have caused a redistribution of some of the topics of the

original lectures, but I hope the volume is none the worse for that.

I have not attempted to remove from the text evidences of its having been composed for oral delivery, but have, rather, tried to make the newly written portions conform to the familiar style and tone of the rest. This is not a formal treatise for experts and is most assuredly not a textbook setting forth views that are to be taught to students as established facts. It is merely a collection of suggestions of a more or less speculative character—some, I think, well supported by the evidence, others more doubtful, but I hope not uninteresting or unprofitable. We shall never succeed in the interpretation of the past without the use of the constructive imagination. Facts are dead and useless until we try to ascertain what they mean, and I do not see why those most familiar with the facts should leave the interpretation of them to others. Undoubtedly all of us do, privately and with our intimate friends, form and try out hypotheses of interpretation for which we have often very scanty evidence. The main value of such hypotheses is that they

make us alert to see the significance of facts which had previously passed unobserved or uninterpreted.

Yet I would not have this preface understood as practically cancelling the text that follows it. I have formed the hypotheses here presented after much and careful study and I have tried sincerely to form only such as harmonize with the permanent elements of human nature and the special conditions of life and thought in Chaucer's England.

My indebtedness to my friend, Professor Edith Rickert, appears on almost every page. It began with her offer to look up passages and verify references for me during the necessarily hurried preparation of the original manuscript. But her indefatigable zeal in research and the readiness with which her clear and well-stored mind interprets the facts she finds have long since changed her cooperation from that of mechanical aid to that of active participation in all that gives the volume whatever value it may possess. I cannot adequately express my obligations to her.

J. M. M.

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SOME NEW LIGHT ON CHAUCER

CHAUCER'S EDUCATION

I

One of the most interesting chapters in Professor Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer*, a work which thirty years ago marked an epoch in Chaucer research, was that entitled "The Chaucer Legend." This chapter was devoted to an examination of the early accounts of Chaucer's life, and was of great service to scholars in disposing of many purely imaginary incidents and features, most of which arose from interpreting biographically two works now definitely known not to have been written by Chaucer. These works are the *Testament of Love*, which Dr. Henry Bradley proved to have been written by Thomas Usk, a contemporary and admirer of Chaucer, and the poem called *The Court of Love*, which all modern scholars join Professor Skeat in regarding as composed not earlier than the middle of the fifteenth century. It may be suspected, however, that in disposing

of much that was undoubtedly legendary, Professor Lounsbury dismissed with too little investigation some, at least, of the ancient traditions.

Early students of Chaucer were greatly impressed by his learning, and "learned" is perhaps the epithet they most frequently applied to him. To account for his erudition, they supposed him to have been educated at both of the universities, to have spent much time in France and Flanders, and upon his return home to have frequented the courts at London and the colleges of the lawyers. Modern scholars, with different standards, have not taken Chaucer's learning very seriously, and have scarcely inquired where he was educated or whether indeed he received any formal training. It is undoubtedly true that, not merely when measured by modern standards, but when compared with such professional scholars as John Wyclif, William of Ockham, or Thomas Bradwardine, Chaucer was not a learned man. Yet his works carry abundant proofs of a devotion to books and to learning which fairly entitles him to the epithet bestowed upon him by his ancient ad-

mirers. Not only was he able to read four languages—English, French, Italian, and Latin; not only did he possess, according to his own testimony, sixty books—a number rarely to be found in the fourteenth century in the possession of any private individual; not only was he familiar with a considerable number of the Latin classics and with the writings of several of the Fathers of the Church; he had apparently more than a casual acquaintance with the great theological controversies on predestination and grace carried on in a preceding generation by Thomas Bradwardine and in his own day by such men as John Wyclif and Ralph Strode, and more than a superficial knowledge of the science of his time as represented by the real sciences of physics and astronomy and the pseudo-sciences of astrology and alchemy. Even making the greatest deductions from his learning, enough remains to raise a question as to how he obtained it.

If, as seems likely, he spent his childhood in London, he probably attended one of the three schools which Leach informs us flourished in the city in Chaucer's youth. These

were the school of St. Paul's, that of the Arches (at St. Mary le Bow), and that of St. Martin's le Grand. Which of the three has the best claim upon the future poet as an alumnus it is impossible to say. John Chaucer's house in Thames street lay somewhat nearer to the school of the Arches than to either of the others, but the difference in distance was slight, and it is not certain that, when Geoffrey was of school age, his father occupied the Thames street house.

The current view, which is not based upon any careful investigation, is apparently that his education was chiefly that of a page in the household of Prince Lionel. Those who hold this view would doubtless cite in support of it the common practice of the time by which children of noble or gentle families were placed as pages in the households of the great to secure the social equipment necessary for a gentleman. But Chaucer's intellectual equipment was more varied, serious, and scholarly than that which would have been produced by such a course of education. Pages received training in manners, in social customs, and in the athletic exercises prepara-

tory to a career of knighthood. They doubtless also received some instruction in reading, writing, and elementary arithmetic, and perhaps were encouraged in the composition of verses and in the acquisition of some skill in music. Chaucer apparently had all these accomplishments, but they are far from exhausting his equipment. We have no reason to believe that the training of a page included instruction in Latin or encouraged an interest in theology or in science. It is, of course, not impossible that Chaucer's interest in these matters and his training in them were due to his own native bent or to the example and encouragement of some unknown scholar with whom he somehow came into contact, but we should not adopt such an hypothesis until we have ascertained whether any other explanation exists that is more probable.

Among the ancient traditions rejected by Professor Lounsbury is one which has until now received no attention from any modern scholar. In the edition of Chaucer's works published in 1598, Thomas Speght made the following statement: "Yt semethe that these lerned menne [Chaucer and Gower] were of

the Inner Temple, for that manye yeres since master Buckley did see a recorde in the same howse, where Geffrye Chaucer was fined two shillinges for beatinge a Franciscane Fryer in fletestreate." Although this statement was accepted as true, or at least probable, by Sir William Dugdale and later writers on the inns of court, it was rejected by a Chaucer specialist as improbable almost as soon as made. Francis Thynne, in his *Animadversions* on Speght's edition, writes as follows:

> But for myne owne parte, yf I wolde stande vppon termes for matter of Antiquytye, and ransacke the originall of the lawiers fyrst settlinge in the Temple, I dobte whether Chaucer were of the temple or noe, vnlest yt were towardes his latter tyme, for he was one olde manne,—as apperethe by Gowere in Confessione amantis —in the xvi yere of R. 2: when Gower wroote that Booke. And yt is most certeyne to be gathered by cyrcumstances of Recordes, that the lawyers were not in the temple vntill towardes the latter parte of the reygne of kinge Edwarde the thirde; at whiche tyme Chaucer was a grave manne, holden in greate credyt, and employed in

> embassye; so that me thinkethe he sholde not be of that howse; and yet, yf he then were, I sholde iudge yt strange that he sholde violate the rules of peace and gravytye yn those yeares. But I will passe ouer all those matters scito pede, and leave euerye manne to his owne iudgemente therein for this tyme.

Thynne's rejection of the story, it is clear, depends upon two arguments, both of which are unsound. In the first place, he held that the lawyers were not in the Temple until toward the latter part of the reign of Edward III. In the second place, he held that Chaucer was then too old to have become a member of the house, or at least if he were a member, too old to violate the rules of peace and gravity. But Thynne wrote on the supposition that Chaucer was born in 1328, and as he speaks of Chaucer's having been "employed in embassye," it is obvious that he did not think the lawyers obtained possession of the Temple until after 1370. If these views were true, the story would indeed be improbable, but general opinion now assigns the birth of Chaucer to some year not far from

1340, and it is known from official records that the lawyers had possession of the Temple as early as 1347. Thynne's argument against Speght's story has therefore no longer any validity.

Mr. Lounsbury rejected the story with practically no real examination. He remarked: "This, like the meeting with Petrarch, is a story which, whether true or not, we all feel ought to be true. From the little we know of the poet, it is a natural inference that it is an account of an event that might well have happened. But, unfortunately, no one, so far, save Master Buckley, has seen this record, and there seems to be no one now who can give us any information about Master Buckley himself." In a footnote, Mr. Lounsbury suggested that Buckley may have been the Master Buckley mentioned by Richard Mulcaster in his *Book of Education*, printed in 1581, and he quoted from Mulcaster an account of the academic career of this Master Buckley. Mr. Lounsbury then passed on to the well-known anecdote of Chaucer invented by Chatterton on the basis of Speght's account. It may be ad-

mitted without discussion that this Master Buckley, although he published two books which might have interested Chaucer as a scholar, is not very likely to have seen a record in the archives of the Inner Temple. But this is not the right Master Buckley.

Several months ago when I was engaged in a systematic investigation of the Canterbury pilgrims, an investigation in which I was greatly aided by my friend and former pupil, Professor Edith Rickert, I remarked that we had found definite lines of connection between Chaucer and many of the members of the Canterbury group. Professor Rickert replied that we had as yet got no information about the Friar. I then recalled Speght's story and suggested that we investigate it. Professor Rickert offered to make the search for Master Buckley, which was obviously the first point of attack. Much to our surprise, the first volume examined, Inderwick's *Calendar of the Inner Temple Records*, yielded the desired information. Master Buckley turned out to be the one man in England whose business it was to have seen such a record, if it existed. He was not only a mem-

ber of the Society of the Temple but the official whose duties included the preservation and care of the Temple records. A detailed account of the investigation and its results has recently been published by Professor Rickert. Here it may suffice to summarize the evidence which she found and the conclusions at which she arrived in pursuing independently the investigation begun at my suggestion.

The earliest records of the Inner Temple have all perished. Some, indeed, are said to have been destroyed in the Temple Church by the rebels in 1381. These seem, however, to have been, not the records of the lawyers, but those of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Certainly many early records of the lawyers existed when Speght wrote, and there is no reason why that concerning Chaucer may not have been among them. But although not only the record which Master Buckley saw, but all other fourteenth and fifteenth century records of fines for violations of the regulations of the Temple, have now perished, a sufficient number of sixteenth century documents still exists to prove that the rules and regulations of the Temple were

entirely similar to those of Lincoln's Inn, extant records of which go back to 1422, the generation immediately following Chaucer's death. The Lincoln's Inn records may therefore be safely used to test the probability of such an offense and such a fine as Master Buckley professed to have seen recorded against Geoffrey Chaucer.

A study of the records of Lincoln's Inn shows that fighting and other disorderly conduct were among the offenses most frequently subject to fines, and that the fines imposed ranged commonly from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 3*s.* 8*d.* Chaucer's offense, then, with its fine of 2*s.* would seem to have been in entire accord with the spirit of the times and the place, and to have been regarded with only moderate disapproval. Fleet street, it will be remembered, is the street which bounds the property of the Temple on the north. At that time it and the Temple property lay outside the city, and we may suspect that for some reason to us unknown the young law-student Chaucer got into an altercation with some Franciscan friar, who was perhaps passing between the convent just inside the city gate and West-

minster. It is clear enough that Chaucer himself must have been a member of the Temple, or he would not have been subject to its jurisdiction.

It appears, then, that there is not only no sufficient reason for rejecting the statement of Master Buckley but, rather, abundant reason for accepting it as true and accurate. He was by the very nature of his office familiar with the Temple records; like every educated man of his day, he knew well who Geoffrey Chaucer was, and he was therefore not likely to have mistaken the name of some other Chaucer for that of the poet; he had no motive for making a false statement, certainly none for inventing a record contradictory to the currently received views concerning the date of Chaucer's birth and the early history of the Temple.

We may accept his testimony—at least provisionally—and proceed to inquire, first, what was the nature of the education given in the Temple; next, whether Chaucer's family was financially able to give him such an education, and whether the family history and ambitions harmonize with the kind of career for which

the Temple would prepare a young man; and finally, whether Chaucer's official career is made more natural and intelligible by such a training. We shall then be able, perhaps, to understand more clearly also certain features in Chaucer's career as poet and to interpret more justly his aims and his accomplishments.

The nature of the Temple training may best be understood from a consideration of the character and functions of the Temple at this time. For information upon this point we are largely indebted to the account of Sir John Fortescue, who was himself a member of a similar organization, the Society of Lincoln's Inn, and whose legal studies began not more than fourteen years after the death of Chaucer.

The Temple was one of the inns of court, organizations for the teaching and study of the common law. According to Fortescue, students of the law first entered one of the inns of chancery, "where they studied the nature of original and judicial writs, which are the very first principles of the law." After having made some progress there, they

were admitted into the inns of court, properly so called:

> There is both in the inns of court, and the inns of chancery, a sort of academy, or gymnasium, fit for persons of their station; where they learn singing, and all kinds of music, dancing and such other accomplishments and diversions (which are called revels) as are suitable to their quality, and such as are usually practiced at Court. At other times out of term, the greater part apply themselves to the study of the law. Upon festival days, and after the offices of the church are over, they employ themselves in the study of sacred and prophane history: here every thing which is good and virtuous is to be learned: all vice is discouraged and banished. So that knights, barons, and the greatest nobility of the kingdom, often place their children in those inns of court; not so much to make the laws their study, much less to live by the profession (having large patrimonies of their own), but to form their manners and to preserve them from the contagion of vice.

It is clear that the inns of court gave a training specially adapted to fitting a young

man for a social and professional career of the sort actually pursued by Chaucer in later life. Sir John Fortescue was justified in speaking of the inns of court as universities, and in declaring that as a preparation for practical life the education given in them was greatly to be preferred to that given in the universities. Chaucer himself tells us in the description of the Manciple that many of the leading members of the Society of the Temple were engaged not so much in the practice of law as in what we should now call business administration. Speaking of the masters of the Manciple he says:

Of maistres hadde he mo than thriës ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious,
Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engëlond.

Fortescue emphasizes two other features of this education which deserve our attention: namely, the expense of procuring it, and the classes of society from which the students came. He writes as follows:

> In these greater inns a student can not well be maintained under *eight and twenty pounds* a year:[1] and, if he have a servant to wait on him (as for the most part they have), the expense is proportionably more: for this reason, the students are sons to persons of quality; those of an inferior rank not being able to bear the expenses of maintaining and educating their children in this way. As to the merchants, they seldom care to lessen their stock in trade by being at such large yearly expenses. So that there is scarce to be found, throughout the kingdom, an eminent lawyer, who is not a gentleman by birth and fortune; consequently they have a greater regard for their character and honour than those who are bred in another way.

These remarks suggest two questions in regard to Chaucer's family. First, were his parents wealthy enough to be able to give him so expensive an education? Second, granted that they were able, are there any features of the family history which suggest that they would have been interested in an education of this sort?

[1] Equivalent to about $3,000 at present money values.

Modern researches have made accessible many records concerning the social and financial status of the family, but certain misconceptions prevail to such an extent that it seems worth while to notice them. For example, the idea that Chaucer's father was a tavern-keeper, and that the poet owed his career as page and as esquire to the fortunate accident of his father's being on some occasion called upon to furnish wine to the royal household is still almost as prevalent as the idea that he owed his later career as public official to a patronage arising from appreciation of his work as a poet. Perhaps the view that he was the son of a tavern-keeper derives its persistence from the picturesqueness of Dr. Furnivall's imaginative account of the boy Geoffrey playing about his father's tavern in Thames street and storing up the vivid impressions of which he later made use in his tavern scenes and his denunciations of drunkenness. Familiarity with the pageant of human life as displayed in a fourteenth century English tavern might indeed have been a rich and stimulating experience for the future poet of the Canterbury Tales, but we are con-

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cerned, not with fancies but with facts. And as a plain matter of fact, the term *vintner*, the designation applied to Chaucer's father as well as to certain earlier members of the family, does not primarily mean a tavern-keeper but a wholesale importer and wine merchant. Some fourteenth century vintners undoubtedly owned taverns, but they seem usually not to have operated them in person, but only to have financed them, as brewers in modern times often finance retail houses. There is no evidence that Chaucer's father was a tavern-keeper, and much to indicate that he was not.

I shall not ask you to consider all the evidence in regard to Chaucer's ancestry, though much can now be added to that contained in the *Life Records*. Suffice it to say that the direct line of descent for four generations is open to little, if any, question. It can best be seen in Dr. Kern's careful dissertation entitled *The Ancestry of Chaucer*. The earliest members of the direct line of whom we have definite knowledge were tavern-keepers having some connections with London, but living mainly in Ipswich. But the fortunes and so-

cial status of the family were steadily rising. The poet's grandfather, Robert Chaucer, his step-grandfather, Richard, and his father, John, were vintners, or wholesale wine merchants, and all three were, like their great descendant, employed in the collection of the king's customs.

Of Robert, the grandfather, we know comparatively little beyond the facts that he inherited certain property in Ipswich, that he was a vintner, and that in 1308 and 1310 he was deputy to the king's butler—part of whose duties consisted in the collection of prisage and butlerage on imported wines. He died some time between the early part of 1312 and the latter part of 1315. On October 29 of the year last mentioned, his widow, Mary, acknowledged that she owed seventy pounds (a present value of about ten thousand dollars) to one Nicholas de Halweford, and promised to pay half the sum on the second of the following February—that is, in about ninety days—and the other half at Easter. She gave as security her lands and chattels in the city of London and elsewhere. This document has been interpreted by Chaucer's biog-

raphers as implying that Robert died leaving his wife seriously in debt. But it is not at all certain that the debt was contracted by Robert; it may have been a loan made at this very time to Mary herself; and in any event it is clear that she owned in London and elsewhere property which was regarded as good security for the amount.

It appears that Mary, who belonged to the substantial Ipswich family of Westhales, was married three times: once, as we have seen, to Robert Chaucer, by whom she had a son John and a daughter Isabella; once—certainly, as we now know, before her marriage to Robert Chaucer—to John Heyroun, by whom she had a son Thomas, who died in April 1349; and finally to Richard Chaucer, a first cousin of her husband Robert.

The financial condition of all members of this family seems to have been highly satisfactory. We have already seen that as a widow Mary possessed considerable property in London and elsewhere—enough at least to secure a loan for seventy pounds. The son Thomas Heyroun, at his death in April 1349, left a number of tenements in the city of Lon-

don to be sold by his "brother, John Chaucer," who was sole executor of his will. The wealth of Richard Chaucer, who also died in April 1349, is indicated, not merely by the property he bequeathed to provide a perpetual daily requiem mass for the repose of the souls of himself, his late wife, Mary, and Thomas Heyroun, but also by the considerable sums which he was several times assessed to contribute to loans made by the principal merchants of the city to the king, and still more clearly, perhaps, by the fact that in 1346 he supplied five hundred pounds (equal to about seventy-five thousand dollars now) to a syndicate headed by Walter de Chiriton and John de Wesenham to lend money to the king.

John Chaucer, the poet's father, appears to have been born in Ipswich in the year 1313, and upon his father's death became heir to certain property in that town. In 1324, his father's sister Agnes, who had married Walter de Westhale, his mother's brother, but who was then a widow with two daughters, conspired with Geoffrey Stace and others and abducted the boy John, with the intention of

marrying him to her daughter Joan, in order to secure possession of the Ipswich property. This plan was detected and was the subject of a lawsuit brought by John's mother and his stepfather, Richard Chaucer, against Agnes de Westhale and her fellow conspirators, resulting in the imprisonment in the Marshalsea of Geoffrey Stace, one of the principals in the abduction, and the imposition upon the defendants of the enormous fine of two hundred and fifty pounds. Ceoffrey testified in 1328 that John Chaucer had been satisfied concerning the fine. Chaucer scholars seem to think that a compromise was arranged. But the fine may have been paid in full, for on July 13, 1328, only a few days before Stace made this declaration, he is recorded as borrowing 250 *l.*

The next record of John Chaucer is in 1338, when Edward III, with an enormous retinue, made a journey to the continent and up the Rhine to negotiate an alliance with Louis IV. John Chaucer was among those who obtained royal letters of protection to go abroad with the king and in the king's service, and apparently accompanied the royal party as far as Cologne. Among the other

members of the party visiting Cologne were John Heyroun, John Chaucer's kinsman, and Henry Northwell, possibly the first husband of that Agnes who by 1354—probably ten or fifteen years earlier—had become John Chaucer's wife and presumably the mother of the future poet. Whether John Chaucer, who was now about twenty-five years old, had already become a vintner does not appear from the evidence accessible to us. On August 1, 1342, however, he was one of the fifteen vintners present and consenting to an ordinance made by the mayor, the aldermen, and the commonalty of London against the sale of bad wines in taverns; and in all the transactions concerning the property of his half-brother, Thomas Heyroun, he is also designated as vintner.

The first records which mention John Chaucer's wife, Agnes, are connected with certain property which came to her as niece and heiress of Hamo de Copton, citizen and moneyer of London, whose will, dated December 6, 1329, was entered on the Husting Rolls in July 1330. Hamo de Copton left two sons, named John and Nicholas, upon whose death without issue the entailed prop-

erty apparently devolved to Agnes. We are ignorant both as to the maiden name of Agnes and as to the date of her marriage to John Chaucer. From evidence which I cannot now discuss, it seems possible that her family name was Pelican, and that she came from Kent. It is certain that before marrying John Chaucer she had been married to a man named Northwell. This was perhaps the Henry Northwell mentioned above as a companion of John Chaucer's on the trip to Cologne. We know, at any rate, that he was a kinsman of William de Northwell, at one time keeper of the king's wardrobe and his principal financial agent, a connection which is possibly not without some bearing upon the poet's later connection with court circles. The earliest definite record of Agnes as wife of John Chaucer belongs to the year 1354, when the two made a deed granting to Simon de Plaghe, physician, citizen of London, and Joan, his wife, a brewing tenement with houses, buildings, and garden adjacent, and two shops and solars, formerly the property of Hamo de Copton in Aldgate street in the parish of St. Botulph just outside the city

wall. At a later date, February 1363, the two again concurred in the transfer of ten and a half acres of land with appurtenances, consisting of twenty-four shops and two gardens, in Stepney and in the parish of St. Mary Mattefalon without Aldgate.

Like his father and stepfather, John Chaucer was an officer of the customs. On February 12, 1347, he was appointed deputy of the king's chief butler, John de Wesenham, for collecting the duty on wines imported by merchant strangers in the ports of Southampton, Chichester, Seaford, Shoreham, and Portsmouth, and he continued in this office for somewhat over two years. On April 28 of the same year he became also deputy for Wesenham as collector of export duties on woolen cloths from the same ports. It will be remembered that John de Wesenham was one of the heads of the syndicate for lending money to the king, with which Richard Chaucer was associated in 1346. That John Chaucer was at this time an important figure in city affairs is shown by a number of transactions recorded in the city *Letter Book*. He died some time between January 16, 1366, the date

of the last deed we have from him, and May 6, 1367, when his wife, Agnes, is described as "wife of Bartholomew atte Chapel and formerly wife of John Chaucer."

The history of the family, then, for at least two generations shows that they had wealth enough to give Chaucer the advantages of an education in the Temple if they so desired; and the service of his father, his grandfather, and his step-grandfather in the king's customs may have made the family more ready to spend money to educate their son for an official career than, according to Fortescue, merchants usually were.

If Chaucer was indeed a student in the Temple, it is not difficult to suggest with some probability the approximate date of his attendance there. It probably lies, in part at least, between October 1360, when he brought Prince Lionel's letter from Calais to England, and June 20, 1367, when he was granted a pension of 20 marks as yeoman of the king. We know nothing of his career or connections during this period, except that the absence of his name from the list of Prince Lionel's retinue on the expedition to Ireland suggests

that he was no longer a member of that prince's household. Chaucer's biographers have usually held that the language of the grant of 1367 implies that he had long been in the service of the king, but Professor Samuel Moore and Professor Rickert have rightly contested this. The language is similar to that used when Philippa Chaucer was appointed *domicella* to Constance of Castile, who had only recently come to England. Moreover the absence of Geoffrey's name from the grant of Philippa's pension in September 1366 probably implies, as Professor Moore suggests, not that Geoffrey was not yet married to Philippa, but that he was not yet a member of the royal household. Upon Chaucer's return to England in October 1360 he would have been somewhere between 15 and 20 years of age and he may well have devoted himself for several years to those legal studies which furnished the best training then accessible for a career as government official or man of business. Six and a half years would of course not have sufficed to make him an eminent man of law. Fortescue tells us that at least sixteen years were required of a

sergeant of the law. But nothing in Chaucer's career implies that he ever attained such a degree as sergeant or ever practiced law. Six and a half years may have been enough to give him an adequate training for such a career as he planned and had. And if it were not, there is the possibility that he continued his legal studies even after he became a member of the king's household. The early records of Lincoln's Inn list among the members of the Inn a number of squires of the royal household and the regulations provided for special concessions to such persons. Moreover, if the household regulations of Edward III were similar to those of Edward IV, only half of the esquires were required to be in attendance at a time, and Chaucer would have had half his time free.

It appears then that there is no sufficient reason for rejecting the testimony of Master Buckley concerning the existence in his day of a record indicating that Geoffrey Chaucer was educated in the Temple; and it appears further that the wealth of his family and its connections with official business were such as to make it not unlikely that he was so educated.

II

Let us next examine the records of Chaucer's official career with a view to ascertaining whether they harmonize better with the old conception of him as a man without special training, who obtained his offices because he wrote poetry, or with the new conception of him as one who had prepared himself for an official career by special training.

It may be freely admitted that for his career as yeoman and later as esquire of the royal household, no business training was necessary, although it may have been of some value. But the records indicate pretty clearly that, although he remained for many years nominally an esquire of the king and enjoyed a pension as such, he was not regularly in attendance at court after June 12, 1374, when he made oath as controller of the customs and subsidy of wool, hides, and woolfells. Even while he was still actively engaged as esquire he performed duties for which his legal training gave him special preparation.

It is well known that between the middle of 1370 and the end of 1378 he was engaged

upon no less than seven missions to France, Flanders, and Italy on the king's business, including such important matters as the negotiation of a commercial treaty with Genoa and a treaty of peace with France. The mission to Genoa and Florence in 1373 seems especially significant for our inquiry. Chaucer was the only Englishman on it; the other members were Giovanni de Mari, described as "civis Januensis," and Jacopo de Provano of Carignano, who had several times been employed by Edward III to hire ships and fighting men for him and who was at this time *locum tenens* for the brother of the Duke of Genoa as admiral of a fleet of Genoese galleys. The negotiations with Genoa concerned the choice of a port in England with special privileges for Genoese merchants; those with Florence are described as "secret business for the king" and were apparently conducted by Chaucer himself. Professor A. S. Cook has recently produced good reasons for believing that the business was of considerable importance and delicacy, being no less than that of borrowing money for the king. As Chaucer does not seem to have served on these

missions as a mere messenger, it is natural to suppose that he had some special business qualifications for the service. A careful study of the persons concerned in missions contemporary or nearly contemporary with Chaucer was recently made by two of our graduate students, Miss Hilda Taylor and Miss Evelyn Tripp. The personnel of nearly four hundred such missions was investigated. About eighty of them contain members concerning whose social status and business training no information has been discovered, but in all cases in which it was possible to ascertain the facts, that is, about three hundred and twenty, it appears that the last-named member of the commission is always a person who has had some legal training. It seems, therefore, not an unfair assumption that the frequency with which Chaucer was chosen for such negotiations was due, not to his eminence as a poet, or even to any personal connection with men in power, however much this may have assisted, but primarily to his possession of special qualifications for the work.

From June 12, 1374 to December 1386, as is well known, Chaucer held the office of

controller of the customs and subsidy of wool, woolfells, and hides in the city of London, and from April 20, 1382 to the end of 1386 he also held the office of controller of the petty customs in the same port. For the second office he was permitted to have a deputy, but this was not customary for the first and consequently he was required to keep the rolls with his own hand, a permanent deputy not being permitted until February 17, 1385. It may be contended that no business training was necessary for the exercise of the functions of controller, but certainly if this official was to be more than a figurehead, and particularly if it was required that he should perform the duties of the office in person, it would seem that questions concerning the interpretation and application of the customs regulations would arise constantly which would make desirable, if not necessary, the possession of business experience and legal training.

I will not stop now to argue about the circumstances attending the termination of Chaucer's controllerships in December 1386. The current view is that he was dismissed from

office by the commission appointed by the parliament of 1386 (of which he was a member) to inquire into the conduct of the public business. This may be true, but it is a view which should not be accepted without further investigation. Certainly it would be unjustifiable to infer that dismissal from office implied incompetence or irregularities of any sort. The commission was strictly a partizan political body, from whom an impartial investigation was not expected. In any event, it is well known that in August 1385, a full year before the meeting of the Reform Parliament, Chaucer was appointed one of the justices of the peace for the county of Kent. The significance of this appointment has not always been fully recognized. In later times, perhaps, the office was one of little dignity and was conferred upon persons whose qualifications for it are not very clear. We all recall that Justice Shallow was of the quorum, but we are too apt to forget that even he had studied in Clement's Inn and was supposed to have some learning in the law. During the reign of Edward III, the commission of the peace had been definitely constituted and its

powers defined. In every county there were assigned one lord and with him three or four of the most worthy in the county with some learned in the law. These had power of inquiry, restraint, pursuit, arrest, and punishment, and specifically were authorized to hold sessions four times in the year and to hear and determine—*oyer et terminer*—at the king's suit, all manner of felonies and trespasses done in the same county. That this was the status and authority of justices of the peace when Chaucer was appointed is clear from the language of the patent dated October 12, 1385 and addressed to Chaucer, and still more explicitly from the commission dated June 28, 1386 and directed to Simon de Burley, Warden of the Cinque Ports, and others, including Chaucer. Of the persons named in this commission, five were justices in the king's courts. All the remaining members except Chaucer and William Topclif were members of important landed families of Kent, and Topclif had been land steward to the archbishop of Canterbury and held several pieces of land in Kent—as also did some of the lawyers on the commission. It

would appear, therefore, that Chaucer was appointed to this commission either because he owned lands in Kent or because he had some knowledge of the law.

On June 12, 1389, Chaucer was appointed clerk of the king's works at Westminster Palace, the Tower of London, and elsewhere, with power to impress workmen, to purvey materials and carriage, to pursue absconding workmen, to arrest contrary people, to make inquisition as to materials embezzled, and to sell the residue of trees felled for timber; and on March 12, 1390, he was joined in commission with Sir Richard Stury and others to survey the walls, ditches, sewers, bridges, etc., on the bank of the Thames between Greenwich and Woolwich, and to enforce against all offenders the Law of the Marsh. Such appointments obviously implied considerable ability in Chaucer. Of course it may be argued that his experience as controller of the customs was a sufficient preparation for such work, but it cannot be denied that such training as he would have obtained in the Temple would have been of great service, if not indispensable.

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At some time in the fourteenth year of Richard II, a Geoffrey Chaucer, apparently the poet, was made sub-forester of the king's park in North Petherton. It has been commonly assumed that he had been dismissed from the offices which he had previously held, and only thereafter succeeded in obtaining the appointment as forester. The dates of the events make this a little difficult to believe. He was not superseded as controller of the works until June 17, 1391. As he obtained the appointment as forester at some time during the year ending June 20, he must either have obtained it before he lost the clerkship on June 17, or he must have made great speed in obtaining it in the remaining three days of the year. It therefore seems more probable that he gave up the clerkship of his own accord than that he was dismissed from it and found himself obliged to secure another post. No doubt the forestership was less exacting than the clerkship of the king's works, and it is barely possible that in the robberies which he suffered on the third and sixth of September 1390 he may have received injuries which would explain his desire for an

easier position. Moreover the financial situation of a clerk of the king's works can hardly have been very satisfactory. He was expected to advance considerable sums, and repayment was tardy and irregular. In the spring of 1391 Chaucer lent the Exchequer 66*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* (more than twice his year's pay), and when his clerkship terminated there was owing him more than 20*l.*, the greater part of which remained unpaid for a year.

Although the records of the royal park of North Petherton were still in existence when Collinson wrote his *History of Somerset* and were used by him, they have since disappeared, and diligent inquiry has not resulted in ascertaining whether they are still extant. It is therefore impossible to give a detailed account of Chaucer's duties or his income as forester or to state with certainty whether he took up his residence there. We know in general, however, the nature of the royal forests and the duties of the forester. The forests were huge estates, originally set apart for the royal pleasure, but in the course of time manors were created in them and in some cases even towns grew up within their juris-

diction. As the laws of the forest were a special body of laws, different from the common or the civil law, enforced in special courts, the king's forester must be competent not only to manage a great estate but to protect rights and enforce penalties arising under a special body of laws. This seems very relevant to our argument. The few records that we have of Chaucer between this appointment and his death are not inconsistent with the supposition that he actually resided for a part of his time in this remote region. Certainly the language of the *Envoy to Scogan* would be taken without question to confirm this supposition were it not for the fact that the "stremes hede" at which Scogan knelt and the "solitarie wildernesse" in which the poet represents himself as living forgotten are explained in the margin of the manuscripts as referring respectively to Windsor and Greenwich. But the three manuscripts are closely related, are derived from the same original, and none of them is earlier than a generation after Chaucer's death. Moreover, there is no other evidence that in 1393 (the supposed date of the *Envoy*) Chaucer was living at Green-

wich; and it certainly cannot be denied that Greenwich is less appropriate than distant Somersetshire to the language of the *Envoy:*

Scogan, that knelest at the stremës hede
Of grace, of alle honour, and worthynesse,
In thende of which streme I am dul as dede,
Forgete in solitarie wildernesse;
Yet, Scogan, thenke on Tullius kyndënesse;
Mynnë thy frend ther it may fructifye.

The "stream" mentioned in ll.1,3 must in any event be figurative, for the Thames was not in any literal sense "the stream of grace, of all honor, and of worthiness," and Windsor was no more literally at the head of the stream than Greenwich was lost in solitary wilderness. The reference to Windsor may date from the reign of Henry VI, who spent much of his time at Windsor and may merely reflect the supposition that earlier kings had the same custom.

As to the emoluments of the forestership, although we have no positive information, it is hardly open to question that they were considerable. The office of chief forester was hereditary in the great Mortimer family,

and remained so until the reign of Edward IV, when it fell to the king by inheritance. Chaucer owed his appointment as joint deputy forester in 14 Richard II to Roger, Earl of March, and his reappointment as sole deputy forester in 21 Richard II to the Countess Eleanor, who may have acted after the death of her husband; although this involves the supposition of an error in the record, as the earl did not die until 22 Richard II. She may, however, have acted as representative of the earl while he was absent in Ireland. Chaucer's first recorded successor in the forestership was his supposed son, Thomas Chaucer, who was a man of great wealth. The list of later foresters includes such prominent and wealthy men as Sir William Bonville, Richard Luttrell, the Earl of Ormond, John St. Albin, and Sir Giles D'Aubeny. The park house in which perhaps Chaucer lived remained until the time of Queen Elizabeth, when it was pulled down.

The motive for the appointment of Geoffrey Chaucer to the forestership may have been the fact that he had been a page in the household of Prince Lionel and the Countess

Elizabeth of Ulster, the grandparents of that Earl of Mortimer to whom he owed his appointment. But it is also possible, as was long ago pointed out, that the connection of the Heyroun family with Petherton Forest may have been a contributory influence.

Reviewing the long and perhaps rather tedious survey which we have made of Chaucer's official career in the light of the possibility of his education in the Temple and his preparation for just such a career, we seem justified in making some such statement as this: There is no *a priori* improbability that Master William Buckley, bencher and keeper of the archives of the Inner Temple, actually saw the record he is reported to have seen. There is no improbability in the supposition that the family of Geoffrey Chaucer—a well-to-do family of importers and public officials—had the future poet educated in the Temple as a preparation for an official career. It is no exaggeration to say that the facts of his career harmonize better with the supposition that he had such an education than with the hypothesis that he was an untrained man who owed his appointment to a number of positions

requiring legal or business training to his excellence as a poet and his personal relations with members of the royal family. Further than this we are perhaps not justified in going, but the hypothesis is reasonable; and it is interesting because it presents Chaucer, not as a professional poet rewarded with official plums and enjoying abundant leisure, but as a hard-working official who in the lucid intervals scantily afforded by his official employments wrote his poetry to gratify his own inner impulses and the tastes and demands of his friends and associates.

This conception of Chaucer the poet, whether true or not, certainly is in harmony with the character of his work as contrasted with that of the professional poets of his time. As there are no English poets belonging to this category, we are obliged to use French writers nearly contemporary with him as the other term of the comparison. I shall not go into details. Every scholar familiar with the work of Guillaume de Machaut, Eustache Deschamps, Jean Froissart, or Christine de Pisan will certainly admit that Chaucer has singularly few

poems addressed to patrons or appealing for patronage, even if we include as such all poems so characterized by the doubtful interpretations of modern scholars or so marked by copyists two or more generations after the composition of the poems. There is indeed, I think, no one of Chaucer's poems which, properly interpreted, is inconsistent with the supposition here made as to the nature of his career and his attitude toward his work.

SOME FAMILY MATTERS

It is no part of my present plan to attempt a systematic account of the Chaucer family or of Geoffrey Chaucer's life and work, but only to touch upon certain matters on which there shines, or has seemed to shine, some beam of new light. I hope, therefore, that I may be pardoned if I discuss as briefly as I can three or four subjects which have little connection with one another.

Chaucer and Kent

In the first place, I should like to say a word with regard to Chaucer's relations with Kent. It is well known that he was justice of the peace for that county and in that capacity was appointed with several judges and other gentlemen to hold sessions of *oyer et terminer* and to inquire into the abduction of Isabella, daughter and heir of William atte Halle, out of the custody of Thomas Kershill, at Chisel-

hurst. He represented the county in parliament, and was more than once a witness to transfers of land in the neighborhood of Greenwich and Chiselhurst. All of these facts, especially the first two, imply that he held land in Kent; and though no traces of such a holding have yet been discovered, it should be borne in mind that up to the present time there has been no systematic search for Chaucer records, and such as we possess have come from only a few of the many classes of documents that have been preserved.

But there are other traces of a connection with Kent which have perhaps not received all the attention they deserve. In the preceding lecture I suggested in passing the possibility that the maiden name of Agnes Chaucer, Geoffrey's supposed mother, may have been Agnes Pelican. It will be recalled that she is definitely known to have been the niece and heiress of Hamo de Copton. Hamo de Copton, who was city moneyer, or mint-officer, and who in 1321 is recorded as living in St. Dunstan's parish, seems to have belonged to a family of Kentish origin. According to the *Archaeologia Cantiana* and Hasted's *His-*

tory of Kent, Copton manor was the principal manor in Preston next Faversham, and by 1451 had fallen into the hands of Christ Church Canterbury. One of the prominent families of the same neighborhood was the family of Pelicans, derived apparently from a Robert Pelican de Hibernia, whose name, in various forms, appears frequently in fourteenth century records, and who acquired property in the neighborhood of Rochester. It will be remembered that the seal of Geoffrey Chaucer, used in 1409 by his supposed son, Thomas, represents on its obverse a pelican vulning itself. The well-known prevalence of punning devices in coats of arms suggests a Pelican somewhere in the family tree, and as Agnes Chaucer is the only immediate ancestor whose family name is unknown, the proximity in Kent of the Copton and Pelican families suggests that she may possibly have been a Pelican. Some connection with Kent is at any rate indicated by the entry in John Philpot's *Visitation of Kent* that one Simon Manning de Codham, Kent, who was living in the forty-sixth year of Edward III and the fifth of Richard II married Catherina "soror

Galfridi Chawcer militis celeberrimi Poetae Anglicani."

The Roet Family

That the Philippa whom Geoffrey Chaucer married some time before September 12, 1366 was one of the daughters of Sir Payne Roet and a sister of Katherine, who first married Sir Hugh Swynford and later became, first, mistress and then wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, is now pretty generally accepted, notwithstanding doubts that have from time to time been spread. Perhaps the most radical of these is Mr. Walter Rye's doubt of the very existence of Sir Payne Roet. He says: "I have always considered Sir Payne Roet, the herald, to have been a male Mrs. Harris invented to bolster the marriage connection, and the respectability (?) of John of Gaunt's liaison. Anyhow, no one can trace him in the flesh. The only Rote I find is a Nicholas Rote, taverner." One would have supposed that Mr. Rye's incredulity would not have survived the account of Sir Payne Roet's tomb and inscription printed long ago

by Weaver in his *Funeral Monuments*, for certainly it would be odd to provide a mythical Mrs. Harris with a monument in St. Paul's, an elaborate inscription, and a position in the records of the college of heralds as king of arms of Guienne. But even an incredulity robust enough to survive this could hardly survive the publication of the records concerning Sir Payne long known but assembled only in 1919 by Professor A. S. Cook. These are drawn principally from Kervyn's edition of Froissart and recite Sir Payne's attachment to the service of Queen Philippa when she came to England, his attendance upon her at the siege of Calais, when he was one of the two knights appointed to conduct out of town the citizens whom she had saved, and the statement in connection with the third marriage of the Duke of Lancaster (1396) that his wife was the daughter of a chevalier of Hainaut called Sir Paon de Roet who was in his time one of the chevaliers of the noble and good Queen Philippa. There is, however, certain evidence concerning Roet that has escaped even the researches of Professor Cook. His name appears seven times

in the *Cartulaire des Comtes de Haynault* published under the editorship of L. Devillers. According to these records his name was Gilles de Roet, Ruet or Rueth, commonly called ("dit") Paon or Paonnet (also spelled "Paunet"). He appears in the records as an official of the household of Marguerite, Empress of Germany and Countess of Hainaut, who was the sister of Queen Philippa of England. In 1351, the date of the records, he is officially designated as "maistre vallet del hotel medame" and as "maistre chevalier de no hostel." He was obviously a person of much importance, and his rank justifies the inscription on the tomb of John of Gaunt which declares that his daughter Katherine, John of Gaunt's third wife, came of a knightly family.

The earliest of these records is dated May 11, 1350: "A Monseigneur Paon, pour offrandes pour monseigneur le duck Willaume, le duck Aubiert, et le duck Otton quant il alèrent en pillerinaige à Saint Druon, à Sebourch, le xi jour de may . . . xxxs." The two latest belong to May 1-Aug. 4, 1352.

Most of the records of Paon de Roet in the

Chartulary concern ordinary routine expenditures and similar business. There is one which has a more personal tone and is conceivably of interest to students of Chaucer. On July 27, 1349, the Empress Marguerite, Countess of Hainaut, granted to "Elisabeth fille de Gilles dit Paonnet de Ruet" the prebend of the chapter of Sainte Wandru of Mons, vacant by the death of Beatrix de Wallaincourt. The name of this probable sister of Chaucer's wife Philippa, is at least interesting in view of the suggestion that the Elizabeth Chausier who became a nun in the Priory of St. Helen in London on July 27, 1377—perhaps identical with Elizabeth Chaucy for whose entry into the abbey of Barking on May 12, 1381, John of Gaunt expended 51*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.*—and the Agnes who was one of the *domicellae* of the Queen at the coronation of Henry IV were daughters of the poet. His mother's name, it will be remembered, was Agnes. Perhaps some reader will say that all this is *ignotum per ignotius*, and I willingly admit that it is, but it is none the less amusing to play with the idea.

Another matter of interest in connection

with the probability that Philippa Chaucer was the daughter of a Flemish knight may be recorded, although I do not suggest that it has any value as proof. Among the numerous proverbs used by Chaucer there are, I think, only two which he specifically indicates as belonging to any foreign people. The Cook replies to the jibes of the Host:

> But "sooth pley quaad pley," as the Flemyng seith.

And the Manciple reports as one of the teachings of his Dame:

> The Flemyng seith, and lerne it if thee leste,
> That "litel janglyng causeth muchel reste."

Of course it may be said that although neither Hogge of Ware nor the nameless Manciple was a Fleming, both lived in London where, as Jakke Strawe's meynee thought, there were more Flemings than enough, and plenty of chances of knowing them and their proverbs. But the proverb

quoted by the Manciple at least is not one to be heard much on the streets, and the fact that one proverb occurs in a passage of early composition and the other in one of late date indicates that Chaucer's concern with Flemish proverbs was not a momentary passing interest.

The identification of Paon or Paonnet de Roet, Maistre Chevalier de l'Ostel—perhaps equivalent in English to knight marshall of the household—of the Empress Marguerite with the Sir Payne Roet, two of whose daughters married John of Gaunt and Geoffrey Chaucer respectively, may perhaps be contested. I am not at present prepared to demonstrate it, though I regard it as highly probable. It will at any rate be remembered that Paon is not a very common name, that Sir Payne Roet is said to have come from Hainaut, and that the estates for which Katherine's son, Sir Thomas Swynford, made application after his mother's death lay in Hainaut.

One of the reasons alleged for doubting that Philippa Chaucer was a sister of Katherine and daughter of Sir Payne Roet is that

Thomas Chaucer is not recorded as making application for any inheritance in Hainaut at the time when Sir Thomas Swynford is recorded as having done so. But certainly there is no mystery about this. Assuming that Thomas Chaucer was the son of Geoffrey Chaucer and Philippa Roet, it would seem certain that his claim to his mother's share would arise, not upon the death of his mother's sister Katherine, but upon the death of his mother, which occurred presumably in 1387. It is true that we have no record of Thomas Chaucer's possession of any estates in Hainaut, but we have, so far as is known, no document which would record such possessions even if Thomas had obtained them.

The form in which Chaucer's supposed father-in-law appears in the Hainaut documents suggests some interesting considerations. They may throw no light upon Chaucer's career as a poet, but they do suggest some amusing speculations. In the English record the name of the Flemish knight appears as Payne, which is naturally Latinized in the inscriptions on his tomb as "Paganus." We should, therefore, expect the French form to

be, not "Paon," but "Paien." Yet the French documents concerning the knight's presence in England and his connection with Queen Philippa agree with the Hainaut documents in spelling the name "Paon" or "Paonnet." Taking this French spelling as correct, two interpretations of it seem possible. It is either the French word for *peacock*, or that for a *pawn* in the game of chess. In either event, since it was a nickname ("Gilles, *dit* Paonnet"), it would seem to carry some implication concerning his character and appearance. Is it too bold to guess that he was a vain, self-important little man, rather fond of show? This is certainly the implication if Paonnet is the diminutive of peacock. However this may be, Philippa Chaucer seems beyond reasonable doubt to have been the daughter of a knight who at least enjoyed opportunities of acquiring some wealth, and it is difficult to believe that she would have married Geoffrey Chaucer if he had been, as is sometimes supposed, the undistinguished son of an insignificant tavern-keeper, with no other prospects than those of a yeoman of the royal household.

Philippa Pan'

A few words seem called for concerning a lady who has often been regarded as that Philippa who at some time before 1366 became the poet's wife. It is well known that the earliest records we have of Geoffrey Chaucer—the fragmentary household account of Elizabeth of Ulster for the years 1357-1359—mention gifts and expenditures, not only on behalf of Geoffrey Chaucer, but also on behalf of a mysterious lady who is designated as Philippa Pan'. The last word, Pan', has been commonly regarded as a contracted form of the word *panetaria*, and has been supposed to designate this lady as the Countess Elizabeth's mistress of the pantry. On this basis a very pretty romance has been constructed, the main elements of which are an early love between Geoffrey and this Philippa and an eventual marriage. There are, to be sure, some sentimental objections to this romance. It loses a part of its attractiveness if we bear in mind that at the date of the earliest record Geoffrey was a youth not more than seventeen years old according to the

current view and perhaps even as young as thirteen or fourteen, while Mistress Philippa, if she was indeed the mistress of the pantry, must have been a lady of rather mature years. But the case against the romance should not rest, I think, upon sentimental objections, and certainly it need not. In the first place, in a rather wide reading of household books, expense accounts, and other similar documents, I have met with no instance in which a royal or semi-royal household in England had such an officer as a mistress of the pantry. I must not fail to record an instance on the continent of a lady, apparently of good social position who was called "Paneteresse" and whose Christian name, curiously enough, happens also to be Philippa. It occurs in the charter of Gilles Puche, bourgeois of Mons, in *Chartes du Chapitre de Sainte Wandru de Mons*, edited by Leopold Devillers (II, p. 675): "Et là parmi, lidis Gilles Puche et demoiselle Phelippe le Paneteresse, qui fu se femme, doivent avoir cascun an leur obit in ledicte église." I should therefore not like to deny absolutely the possibility of a woman's being so designated in a great household in

England, but such instances must have been rare. The pantry, like other subdivisions of great households, had a head, but so far as I can discover, that head was always a man designated as "panetarius," or "de la panetrie;" and it does not seem very likely that the household of the Countess of Ulster was an exception. But some Chaucer student will immediately reply triumphantly that, whether likely or not, this household actually did have a woman who was mistress of the pantry, and in support of his statement will cite from the very document under consideration the record for April 4, 1358, when, according to Mr. Bond, the editor of it, payments were made to the pantry mistress, the cook, and the nurse of the countess's little daughter, Philippa. A careful examination of the record will, however, not support this contention. The nurse, to be sure, was a woman, named Agatha. The cook appears to have been a man named Dennis—the record is "Dionisio coquinario." The entry concerning the chief of the pantry reads: "Bette panet[3]." The natural impulse of a modern scholar would be to interpret this record as referring to a woman, but un-

less I am very much mistaken, Bette was in the fourteenth century more commonly the name of a man than that of a woman, being an abbreviation of Bartholomew. Until further evidence is available, therefore, this record does not present an exception to the general rule.

Further consideration of the records concerning Philippa Pan[3] bears out the conclusion just reached. Her name first appears in the record when the Countess Elizabeth was in London buying her wardrobe for the celebration of the Feast of the Garter at Windsor on St. George's Day, 1357. The entry in question reads, in translation: "For the making of a tunic at London for Philippa Pan[3] for the said feast, two shillings sixpence." The next spring the countess is again making purchases in London for the same feast, and pays for the making of a bodice for Philippa Pan[3] and for some furs for that garment or some other, the name of which is lost by a gap in the manuscript. Among the gifts recorded for December 1357 is one of twelve pence to a servant (garcioni) for accompanying Philippa Pan[3] from Pullesdon to the

countess's palace at Hatfield in Yorkshire. Certainly these records do not seem consistent with the supposition that Philippa Pan' was either the mistress of the pantry or one of the ladies, if there were any such, employed in it. It is possible, though not probable, that the countess would have had her pantry mistress with her on the two occasions when she visited Windsor for the great festival of the Garter, but it does not seem very likely that she would have provided this pantry mistress with furred garments for attendance on the festival.

It seems, then, pretty clear that Philippa Pan' was not the mistress of the pantry, and that indeed a mistress of the pantry probably did not exist. What, then, is the meaning of the designation "Philippa Pan'"? Unfortunately, the records of the Ulster household are too scanty to enable us to answer this question with certainty. I thought that some information might be obtained from the mention of Pullesdon as the place from which Philippa was conducted to Hatfield in preparation for the Christmas festivities of 1358. I could find no place in all England having

Pullesdon as the usual form of its name, but there were several which showed Pullesdon among the variant forms. I will spare you the details and hasten to remark that the most likely of these places seems to be Puddelsden in Shrophire, near Wemme, which was the seat of a well-known and wealthy family of the name of Pantolf. I am not prepared to say that Philippa Pan' was a Pantolf, but the abbreviation may as well stand for this name as for *panetaria*, and may well be a family name and not an official designation.

If it is a family name and not an official designation, there is another possibility to be taken into consideration. As a family name, it appears, naturally, in many forms: Panetaria, de la Panetrie, Pentry, Panter, and the like. Years ago Mr. Walter Rye collected from the records many instances of the name and argued for a close connection with the Chaucer family, and it is undoubtedly true that William de Panetrie married Rosina de Knapton, niece of that Joan de Westhale whom they tried to marry to the poet's father in 1324; that in 1356 John de la Panetrie was collector of petty customs in London, and

that in the same year Richard de la Panetrie was gauger of wine at Southampton where John Chaucer had been deputy butler and collector of customs. Various forms of the name are common in the London *Letter Books*.

The evidence, then, seems to be decidedly against the assumption that the Philippa Pan[n] of the Ulster records was a pantry lady, who later married Geoffrey Chaucer. Whether she belonged to the family of the Pantolfs or to that of de la Panetrie is of little interest to us and may be left to future investigators.

The Date of Chaucer's Birth

I should like to add a word concerning the date of Chaucer's birth. Of late years this has usually been assigned to 1340. Some scholars place it a year or two earlier than this, some, a few years later. The evidence that has been taken into consideration consists of Chaucer's own statement in the Scrope-Grosvenor trial of 1386, modified by considerations derived from his enlisting in the French war in 1359, and from certain ex-

pressions by the poet concerning his advancing age. Taken literally, Chaucer's declaration in the Scrope-Grosvenor trial would place his birth about 1345, but many scholars have been unwilling to take it literally. The ablest argument on the subject is that of Professor Samuel Moore, who by an examination of the statements of all the witnesses in the famous case and an ingenious application of vital statistics argues that Chaucer's statement was probably inaccurate by several years. It has always seemed to me questionable whether from the loose and inaccurate statements of a group of mediæval knights one could safely infer similar inaccuracy and looseness on the part of Chaucer, who at least had scientific tastes and a certain amount of practical business experience. And Professor Moore tells me that this accords with his present view of the subject. I feel this still more strongly now that it seems possible that Chaucer had a careful legal training. Certainly, as has been often pointed out, his statement as to the length of time he had borne arms—twenty-seven years—is accurate. The reason for doubting the approximate ac-

curacy of his statement concerning his age is mainly that this would make him only fourteen years old when he enlisted in the French war. But if we interpret "forty and upwards" as meaning forty-one or forty-two, he would be fifteen or sixteen, which is certainly old enough. As may be seen from the London *Letter Books*, the summonses issued by the king regularly called for the enlistment of all able-bodied male citizens between the ages of sixteen and sixty. And living, as Chaucer did, in a chivalric and martial atmosphere, he may well have gone before he attained the legal age. The enlistment of boys under the legal age has been a common feature of all known wars.

It has been thought that Chaucer's complaints of his advancing age, expressed in poems written not later than 1395, lend support to the view that he was born in 1340 or earlier, but it cannot too often be emphasized that little significance can be attached to such passages. Shakespeare, in sonnets composed pretty certainly when he was less than fifty and perhaps not older than thirty, writes of himself as aged, and Chaucer's contemporary,

Eustache Deschamps, speaks of himself as an old man when he was not yet forty-five. Much evidence on this point has been given by Skeat and Lowes and Moore.

Two considerations seem to favor a birth date nearer 1345 than 1340. One is derived from the facts concerning *The Book of the Duchess*. Whether Chaucer is referring to this or not when he says he wrote in youth the story of Ceyx and Alcyon, the poem bears all the marks of immaturity. Either it was written before Chaucer was twenty-nine years old, or we must assume that his talent was notably late in developing. The other consideration is derived from the amount expended for Chaucer's livery by the Princess Elizabeth in 1357. The smallness of this amount as compared with the expenditures for others has seemed to many scholars to justify the view that Chaucer was a page at this time. But it is not clear why clothing for a boy of seventeen should cost less than clothing for a man, whereas such a supposition would be natural if Chaucer were only thirteen or less.

There is nothing, I believe, in Chaucer's career inconsistent with the view that he was

born not earlier than 1343 or 1344. If he was old enough to go to war in 1359, he was certainly old enough to carry a letter from Calais to England in October 1360. And considering the age at which marriage usually occurred in the fourteenth century, it is more likely that he married Philippa at twenty-one or twenty-two than at twenty-six.

It may be freely admitted that all these new views concerning Chaucer's career are speculative, but it should be borne in mind that most of the current views are no less speculative, and that even if no certain conclusions can be reached, it is worth while to prevent speculation from hardening into accepted teachings.

Chaucer's Pitcher of Wine

As we are dealing so largely with speculations, you will perhaps be willing to consider one recently suggested to me by Professor Edith Rickert, who has been my constant helper in these recent inquiries into Chaucer's life and work.

It has long been known that on April 23,

1374, King Edward III granted to Geoffrey Chaucer a pitcher of wine daily, for life, to be received in the city of London from the King's Butler. But certain interesting features of the grant have escaped attention. The grant was made at Windsor by the King himself, who was certainly in Windsor at that time for the celebration of the feast of the Order of the Garter. April 23—the day of the grant—was not only in this year a Sunday, when little business was done, but—a fact of more significance—it was the day of St. George, the patron saint of the Order of the Garter. These circumstances suggest a query whether the grant may not have had some connection with the great feast, and Professor Rickert acutely points out in confirmation of this possibility the fact that while many grants for various reasons were made to various people, including Geoffrey Chaucer himself at a later date, of a tun of wine, there seem to be very few grants of a pitcher of wine daily. We have, I suppose, no absolute proof that at this early date the celebration of the feast of the Garter ever included the presentation of a poem, but it is commonly sup-

posed that *Gawayne and the Grene Knyght* and *Winnere and Wastere* may have been composed in connection with such a feast if not actually presented at it. All this suggests the surmise—the speculation—that Chaucer's pitcher of wine, like so many similar grants in later years, may have been a reward for a poem, perhaps celebrating some theme appropriate to the feast. That no such poem has been preserved to us and that there is no record of it need not spoil so pleasant a query —for it is, in reality, no more than that.

There is, of course, no intention to suggest that Chaucer was "poet laureate," but it should not be forgotten that Henri d'Abrinces received a stipend of *6d.* a day as *versificator regis* from Henry III.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, I

THE HOST, THE REEVE, AND THE MILLER

For more than 500 years men have read with delight of that group of twenty-nine pilgrims whom Geoffrey Chaucer represents as coming together at the Tabard Inn in Southwark one mid-April evening near the close of the fourteenth century. The manner of their assembling, their looks and characters, their actions and words on the journey to Canterbury have been set down for us with a vivid naturalism which has made many readers feel that Chaucer merely described an actual group of pilgrims of which he himself was a member and merely reported the incidents and tales of an actual pilgrimage. On the other hand, scholars, reasoning soberly—perhaps too soberly—about the matter, have rejected this view as altogether without justification and have

taught us that the pilgrimage was purely imaginary and that the group of pilgrims was artificially constructed by Chaucer to include and exhibit representatives of all the principal classes of society and occupational types of his day. The upper classes, they tell us, are represented by the Knight and the Squire; the various church types by the Monk, the Friar, the Prioress, the Nun, the Nuns' Priest, the Parish Priest, the Clerk, the Pardoner, and the Summoner; the professional classes by the Sergeant of the Law and the Doctor; the country folk by the Franklin, the Reeve, the Miller, the Knight's Yeoman, the Plowman; the provincial townsfolk by the Wife of Bath and the Shipman; the city folk by the Merchant, the Manciple, the five city tradesmen and their Cook, and finally the Host of the Tabard Inn.

That the Canterbury pilgrims richly illustrate English life and manners admits of no doubt. There are, however, several considerations which cause one to question the schematic organization of the group and to doubt whether Chaucer really intended to present an exhaustive survey of fourteenth

century society. In the first place, it is, on this principle, difficult to see why certain classes or occupations are included and certain others omitted. Why have we the insignificant Manciple—a comparatively rare and unimportant functionary—and have no archdeacon or parish clerk? Why have we a cloth merchant but no vintner? Why are the tradesmen all chosen, as Professor Kuhl has pointed out, from the non-victualing trades, to the entire exclusion of the brewers, the bakers, the butchers, the fishmongers, and the like? Why have we no smith or goldsmith, or saddler, or armorer, but have the carpenter, whose craft had no official recognition among the London trades? Mediæval industry was minutely subdivided; specialization is no modern invention, as some persons seem to believe; each process in the making or finishing of goods was done by a special craft or trade, and the list of crafts in any typical town, say Beverley, York, Lincoln, Chester, Coventry, or Norwich, runs to three or four score. Chaucer has no shoemaker or glover or glazier or fuller or pinner or cardmaker or wiredrawer, no saddler or ropemaker or

creeler or cooper, no fletcher or tailor or mason or brazier or plumber, no cutler or tanner or barber or painter. The basis of choice would seem to be, not a principle of systematic representation, but something else—perhaps Chaucer's personal interests and prejudices.

A second and more important consideration seems to lend support to this view. Investigation indicates that some at least of the pilgrims were real persons, and persons with whom Chaucer can be shown to have had definite personal contacts. Some of the facts I shall cite in illustration or proof of this statement have long been known, though no one has, I think, drawn from them the legitimate inferences; others have only recently been brought to light—chiefly by Professors Kuhl, Knott, and Rickert. The final result of our inquiry will be—if for the sake of clearness I may anticipate it—not to support the crude view that Chaucer was merely reporting on the pilgrims, the incidents, and the tales of an actual pilgrimage, but to suggest that, though a fiction, the Canterbury pilgrimage is only imperfectly schematic and that the ex-

periences of Chaucer's own life are reflected in some of the pilgrims as chosen and characterized by him.

That Chaucer's character sketches represent not so much types as individuals—typical no doubt of their status and occupations, but typical only as the happily chosen individual may be—will, I think, readily be admitted by any one who bears in mind, what is too often forgotten, that Chaucer's poetry was not written for the world in general nor was it "published," in the modern sense of that term. It was written for a comparatively small social group, to the members of which the persons, places, and experiences hinted at were thoroughly familiar. Allusions which to us mean little or nothing were instantly intelligible to the hearers and readers for whom he wrote. The area of England itself is smaller than we Americans readily conceive. Exclusive of Wales and Scotland, it is slightly smaller than Alabama, Arkansas, or North Carolina; including Wales but not Scotland, it is slightly larger than Michigan, but smaller than Florida or Georgia. The total population of England in Chaucer's day and for

more than a hundred years thereafter was not over two and a half millions; that is, it was less than half that of New York City, slightly greater than that of Brooklyn and less than that of Chicago. The most populous city, London, was not the great sprawling city of today, overhung with fog and smoke, but one fairly justifying the epithets of "small and white and clean" applied to it by William Morris—a city of many gardens, with a population of about 40,000. This means that to form a concrete idea of its size we must think of such American towns as Augusta, Ga. (52,000 in 1920), Aurora, Ill. (36,000), Beaumont, Texas (40,000), Brookline, Mass. (37,000), Butte, Mont. (41,000), Dubuque, Iowa (39,000), Hamilton, Ohio (39,000), Lexington, Ky. (41,000), Pueblo, Col. (43,000), Madison, Wis. (38,000), Montgomery, Ala. (43,000), Pasadena, Calif. (45,000), Shreveport, La. (43,000). The next largest city was York with a population of about 11,000. The business of the country was predominantly rural—agriculture and sheep-raising—and the population predominantly rustic. The

nobility and gentry numbered not more than a few hundred, and their social life centered in London. They were acquainted with one another and knew one another's affairs in the same way that "society" in any of our smaller cities knows all about its members. Such a public, idle, fond of gossip, and not overburdened with books and newspapers, was that for which Chaucer wrote his *Canterbury Tales*, and we may be sure that they caught every sly reference to persons and things they knew. We can understand the spirit and guess at the success of many of Chaucer's sly "digs" and "hits" only if we think of his work as conceived and received like a local Christmas revue or revel that banters and satirizes persons and incidents familiar to every member of the audience. Chaucer was not writing for posterity or even for the whole contemporary population of England, but for a handful of courtiers, gentlemen, churchmen, professional men, officials, and city merchants. There was no need to give them a systematic view of fourteenth century life.

The Host

In testing the nature of Chaucer's portraits, let us begin with that of the Host. Everyone will admit that he is clearly, strikingly, and consistently individualized. His manner of controlling the pilgrims; his varying attitudes toward the Knight, the Prioress, the Franklin, the Merchant, the Cook; his personal reactions to the tales and words of the Pardoner, the Shipman, the Monk, and Chaucer himself; his language; his crafty questioning of the Canon's Yeoman—are all in perfect harmony with the striking characterization of him given in the Prologue:

A semëly man our hostë was with-alle
For to han been a marshall in an halle;
A largë man he was with eyën stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod him lakkedë right naught.
Eek thereto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amongës othere thinges,
Whan that we haddë maad our rekeninges.

So clearly and consistently is he an individual that we are not surprised when the Cook, resenting what we should nowadays call his "kidding," turns on him with a protest and calls him by name:

"Thou seist full sooth," quod Roger, "by my fey!
But 'sooth pley, quaad pley,' as the Fleming seith;
And therefor, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wroth, er we departen heer,
Though that my tale be of an hostileer:
But nathëlees I wol nat telle it yit;
But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit."

Was there, we ask, actually a Harry Bailly who in Chaucer's day kept the Tabard Inn in Southwark? Fortunately we can answer this question, if not perfectly, at least with a satisfactory approach to fullness and accuracy. There was a Harry Bailly of Southwark and he was an innkeeper. Of the seven records concerning him, three were published long ago in *Notes and Queries;* the other four have only recently been discovered.

In the parliament held at Westminster in

50 Edward III (1376-7) and again in that held at Gloucester in 2 Richard II (1378-9) Henri Bailly was one of the two burgesses representing the borough of Southwark. He was, by social and official experience, obviously a man fit

For to han been a marshall in an halle.

It can hardly be doubted that this is the same man who appears in the following entry of the Subsidy Roll for Southwark in 4 Richard II (1380-81): "Henricus Bailiff, Ostyler, Christian Uxor eius—ijs."

It is a curious and interesting fact that although this record of Henry Bailly and his wife in the Subsidy Roll has long been known, neither its original discoverer nor any later scholar has observed that Henry Bailly himself was one of the four controllers of the subsidy for Southwark. Both the counter roll of the controllers, Henry Bailif, Richard atte Vyn, Roger Chandeler, and William Malton, all of Southwark, and their *visus* of the account of the collectors, are preserved under the shelfmarks 184/30 and 184/32 in

the Record Office, where they were recently found by Professor Rickert when she examined them for the purpose of ascertaining whether they gave any more information than had been printed. She may publish later a study of the controllers and collectors: here it may suffice to say that Henry Bailly was not the only innkeeper in the list.

Like other students of Chaucer, I had always supposed that he had neglected to tell us the name of the Host's wife, and I therefore took the liberty of taking somewhat playfully the contrast between the name given in the record and her character as sketched by the Host himself after the telling of the *Tale of Melibeus*. Recently the indefatigable researches of Professor Rickert have discovered that the Host does tell us his wife's name. He says:

I hadde lever than a barel ale
That Godëlief, my wyf, hadde herd this tale!

All editors have written "goode lief" as two words, without capitalisation, as being epithets describing "wyf." But in the four-

teenth century records of Kent Professor Rickert has found some thirty instances of "Godlef" (in various spellings) as a woman's name. This settles the Chaucer passage: the Host tells us that "Godelief" was his wife's name. What are we to say? It is possible, but hardly probable, that "Godelief" was latinized in the record as "Christian" or that the English "Godelief" was used as a sort of bye-form of "Christian." It is possible, of course, that the Christian of 1380 had died and that Harry Bailly had taken another wife by the time Chaucer had the *Canterbury Tales* in hand. And finally it is of course possible that Christian was still living but that Chaucer—although he calls her husband by his right name—preferred, for reasons best known to himself, not to use the right name of the wife.

The answere of this I lete to divynis.

The newly discovered name contrasts as strikingly with the character described in the passage containing it as did the name supplied by the record, but the reader may write his own comment.

That Henry Bailly, hostiler, was still alive at the time usually assigned by scholars to the Canterbury pilgrimage is proved by three recently discovered references. On October 5, 1387, as we learn from the Close Rolls, he was in the parish of Lesnes near Greenwich and was one of the witnesses to a deed of gift of 100*s.* made by Walter Geste of that parish to Sir Thomas Bradfelde, clerk. Four years later—January 17, 1392, according to the Close Rolls—he was appointed special coroner "to view the body of John Polle, wickedly slain in Bermondsey, which, contrary to law, had long lain unburied because the coroners of Surrey, who lived in distant parts, had neglected their duties." Again, on April 25, 1393, Henry Bailly of Southwark was appointed special coroner to view the bodies of Adam Batman and John Turnour there wickedly slain and act as pertains to the coroner's office. By the statute of Westminster coroners were required to be "chosen of the most lawful and wisest knights, who can, may, and will best attend upon that office." These restrictions were later released but the Rolls record the rejection of men ap-

pointed coroner for lack of proper qualifications in land and local domicile. The office was one appropriate to the Henry Bailly, burgess of Southwark, who had represented that borough in parliament.

Do all these entries relate to the same man? Though not absolutely certain, it can hardly be doubted. That in a small town like Southwark there were at the same time two innkeepers named Harry Bailly, no one, I fancy, will be disposed to maintain. We may therefore safely conclude that the host of the Tabard in Chaucer's day actually was named Harry Bailly and consequently that the Host of the *Canterbury Tales* was modeled upon him.

It is strange that scholars—none of whom, perhaps, would seriously dissent from this conclusion in regard to the Host—have not been moved to inquire whether any other members of Chaucer's famous gallery of portraits had living models. But I, at least, cannot criticize them, for the motive which led me to institute this inquiry was, not the actuality of the name and portrait of the Host, but certain details in the account of the Reeve.

The Reeve

You will readily recall the picturesque and highly individualized description of the Reeve in the Prologue:

The Revë was a sclendre, colerik man.
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can;
His heer was by his erës round y-shorn;
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longë were his leggës, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordës sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this revës governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
His woning was ful fair upon an heeth,

With grenë treës shadwed was his place.
He coudë bettrë than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his ownë good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This revë sat upon a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and hightë Scot.
A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

Three features of this description first suggested that Chaucer had in mind a definite person. One was the statement that the Reeve came from Norfolk, beside a town called Baldeswelle; the second was the description of his house as situated on a heath and well shaded by green trees; the third was the specific statement that he had had charge of the manor since his lord was twenty years of age. The last two sounded like bits of per-

sonal observation by Chaucer, the first suggested the question why Baldeswelle—an insignificant village, far from London, almost in the "ferthest end of Norfolk"—should be mentioned, unless Chaucer had some particular reason for interest in it.

The main facts in regard to Baldeswelle—the modern Bawdeswell—were not hard to find. Blomefield's great *History of Norfolk* tells us that it is a hamlet partly in the manor of Foxley, which in the fourteenth century belonged to the estates of the earls of Pembroke. These facts did not, however, suffice to explain why Chaucer's attention was attracted to the Reeve and especially why his presentation of him is always and everywhere charged with malice. The description of his appearance might be merely in the interest of picturesqueness and verisimilitude: A slender, choleric man, with long, lean, calfless legs; close-shaven, short-haired, and docked like a priest; clothed in a long blue surcoat, with tails tucked into his girdle; riding a dapple-grey farm horse, and wearing by his side an old rusty sword.' But his character, though drawn with a semblance of purely objective

art, is carefully wrecked by one of those subtle touches of which Chaucer was so great a master: 'Skilled in all kinds of farm work, as became the reeve of a manor, he was supremely skilled in dealing with officials above him and laborers below, and had been in complete control of the manor since his lord was twenty years of age. He had privily laïd up wealth for himself and was so subtle that he was both thanked and rewarded by his lord for lending him what was really his own property.'

Fortunately a study of the facts regarding the earls of Pembroke and their estates threw some light on the subject. John Hastings, second earl of Pembroke, whose father had died in 1348, came of age on September 12, 1368. Before the following April he went abroad in the retinue of the Prince of Wales and, with the exception of brief visits to England, remained in foreign service until his death in 1375. Here, at once, is a curiously close agreement with the lines:

> And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening
> Sin that his lord was twenty year of age.

On one of the earl's brief visits home he arranged that if he should die without an heir, all his property that was transferable should go to his cousin Sir William de Beauchamp, younger brother of the Earl of Warwick, on condition that he take the whole arms of Pembroke and get the King to allow him to assume the title of Earl of Pembroke. As a son and heir was born to Pembroke in September 1372, this plan did not take effect. But as the heir was a minor on the death of his father in 1375 he and the estates which were held in chief fell into the hands of the king and provision had to be made for them. The heir was allowed to remain in the custody of his mother and grandmother; the estates in England and Wales were variously disposed of. After a faithful inventory had been made, by two clerks appointed by the king, of the stock and other things in the lordships, manors, and lands, including those assigned in dower to the earl's widow, Anne, the custody of two-thirds of the lands in England exclusive of those in Kent was on January 22, 1376 committed to the Countess Anne and her mother Margaret Marshall, the

famous and powerful countess of Norfolk, daughter of Edmund de Brotherton and aunt of king Edward III. A week later, January 29, certain manors in Kent were committed to the custody of the king's esquire, John de Beverle, and on March 9, 1378, King Richard granted the custody of the estates in Wales to Sir William de Beauchamp. In this last transaction the mainpernors or sureties for Sir William de Beauchamp were two: John de Beverle and Geoffrey Chaucer of London. Whether these mainpernors were personal or official we do not know, and we need not stop to inquire whether the appointment implies that Geoffrey Chaucer was a large landowner, though we can hardly believe that either the king or the mother and grandmother of the heir would regard the responsibility of the sureties as of no importance. The other surety, John de Beverle, who had long been in service as one of the king's esquires, was a man of considerable wealth, as is evident from the numerous large grants made to him by the king and the land transactions recorded of him and his wife. Moreover, it was to John de Beverle

that the custody of the Pembroke estates in Kent had been granted in January 1376.

The public for which Chaucer wrote would infallibly recognize immediately his allusion to one of the manors belonging to the Pembroke estates and would be interested in anything concerning the affairs of so great a family. Chaucer himself had additional personal reasons for interest, because of his relations with Sir William de Beauchamp in connection both with the Pembroke lands and with his own trial for the raptus of Cecilia Chaumpaigne in 1380, when Beauchamp appeared as witness in his behalf.

On the mismanagement of some of the estates the records are interesting. Even before the death of the second earl two of his receivers had been called to account, as we learn from the *Calendar of Close Rolls* for 1374. After the death of the earl in 1375 we have no reason to believe that the management improved while the estates were in the hands of the king. Sir William de Beauchamp was much engaged in the king's business in Scotland and France and from 1384 to 1392 was captain of Calais. He could hardly have

given much personal attention to the lordships and lands committed to him. In the autumn of 1386 investigation of his management was officially begun and in 1387 (February 22 and October 6) an arrangement was made between Sir William de Beauchamp on the one side and the young earl's grandmother on the other (his mother having died in 1384). It was agreed that Sir William should be relieved of the custody of the lands and should receive the annual grant from the king of 100*m.* charged upon the estates and further should be free from any claim for waste committed after Easter next (i.e., 1388) on condition that he should appoint two of his council to meet two or three of the council of the countess and the young earl to view the waste in the Pembroke lands. The deputies were to collect what moneys they could to the profit of the said earl from those who had committed wastes.

From the facts just given it is evident that some of the Pembroke estates had been mismanaged from the time the second earl went abroad, soon after his twenty-first birthday, and that some continued to be mismanaged

at least until very near the time at which Chaucer was writing. On the mismanagement of the Norfolk lands I have as yet been unable to get any documentary evidence. They had long been in the sole custody of the young heir's grandmother, Margaret Marshall countess of Norfolk, for Anne countess of Pembroke had in 1376 granted to her mother both all her own property and the custody of all the lordships, manors and lands granted to her by the king as guardian of the heir of Pembroke. But Chaucer represents the Reeve of Baldeswelle as a rascal whose tricks might be suspected but could hardly be proved. How he obtained this information we can only guess. It is possible that he was chosen as one of the two deputies of Sir William to view the waste committed on the lands in his custody. The other mainpernor, John de Beverle, had died in 1381 and apparently had not been replaced. Chaucer had, so far as we know, no official or other duties to prevent him from taking part in such an investigation. It may even be suspected that before this time he had been concerned

about this matter. According to a recently discovered record, on June 23, 1383, he was granted permission to execute the controllership of wool, hides, and woolfells by Henry Gisors as deputy until Allhallows next (about four months) because "he is like to be so much occupied upon particular business that for a certain time he may not without grievous disturbance attend to that office;" and on November 25, 1384 he was given leave of absence for one month for the same reason. Whether he viewed the waste or not, it is likely that, as one personally concerned, he was present at the meeting held at Framlingham to discuss the transfer of the lands in Wales from the custody of Sir William de Beauchamp to that of the countess of Norfolk. If so he may, then and there, have heard reports of the tricky Reeve of Baldeswelle.

Three lines, at least, of the account of the Reeve sound as if Chaucer had visited Baldeswelle:

They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;
With grene trees yshadwed was his place.

The records indicate that Sir William de Beauchamp did not willingly give up the custody of the Pembroke lands that had been committed to him, and it is perhaps not unjustifiable to assume that he and his friends—among whom we can surely count the poet—took no little pleasure in this portrayal of the sly Norfolk Reeve, whose petty thieving had so long been successfully carried on under the very eyes of Sir William's antagonist, the masterful countess of Norfolk. Chaucer's malicious sketch must have been highly entertaining to the great folk at court, all of whom were certainly familiar with the facts concerning the Pembroke lands.

Let this suffice for the Reeve and let us turn to one of the pilgrims whose connection with the Reeve I suspect to be closer than has generally been supposed.

The Miller

The description of the Miller contains certain details that could hardly have become known to Chaucer during the course of the Canterbury pilgrimage. It may be replied

that they were known to him, not in his capacity of ordinary human observer, but in that of omniscient narrator; and this is the view I myself have always taken until recently. But as we find that, like a modern writer, Chaucer sometimes had living models for his portraits, and that there is some evidence of a connection between the Miller and the Reeve before the pilgrims met at the Tabard Inn, we may perhaps include the Miller also among the figures drawn from life.

It is well known that the Miller, who had drunk too much ale before the company set out from the Tabard and who when the *Knight's Tale* is ended is in the quarrelsome stage of drunkenness, insists upon telling a tale instead of the Monk, whom the Host has called upon to follow the Knight. His tale, he announces, is to be

> a legende and a lyf,
> Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,
> How that a clerk hath set the wrightës cappe.

This announcement immediately brings a violent protest, not, as might be expected, from

the London Carpenter, but from the Reeve, who in his youth had learned the carpenter's trade. Does Chaucer intend us to understand that the Miller's tale hit the Reeve by mere accident? The Reeve himself apparently did not think so. After the tale is told, he says:

> This dronkë miller hath y-told us heer
> How that bigyled was a carpenteer,
> Peraventure in scorn for I am oon.

Of course the hit may have been accidental, or it may have been only the evening before at the Tabard that the Miller both heard that the Reeve had learned the trade of carpenter in his youth and took a dislike to him, but surely the simplest explanation is that Chaucer had in mind two persons from the same district—perhaps from the same manor—who had a long-standing quarrel. The Miller knows the Reeve's name—"leve brother Osewold," he calls him; and if there was no quarrel until the Miller announced the subject of his tale, why does Chaucer tell us that the Miller and the Reeve kept apart from the very first? Of the Miller he writes:

A baggëpipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broughte us out of towne;

of the Reeve:

And ever he rood the hyndreste of our route.

The original cause of the enmity of the Reeve and the Miller is apparently not a matter of record, and we can hardly hope to discover it. But well-known facts about the organization of mediæval manors and the usual relations of millers and reeves have long ago been cited to account for their predisposition to quarrel. A mill—a windmill or a watermill—was an usual appurtenance of a manor, and Thorold Rogers suggested that the obligation of all the tenants of the manor to have their corn ground at the manorial mill, together with the frequent suspicion of dishonest dealings on the part of the miller, would readily give rise to ill feeling between the reeve and the miller.

It is of course not to be supposed that the

Miller of the pilgrim group is identical with the miller of Trumpington in the *Reeve's Tale*, although the Reeve is careful to draw a picture of the miller of Trumpington that might well have caused the other Pilgrims to glance with amused curiosity at their fellow traveler. Not only is there much resemblance in appearance and physical traits, but similar tastes and accomplishments are ascribed to them. Both had a certain skill with the bagpipe, both were quick-tempered and ready to fight, and both were sly at stealing corn. Both portraits may well have been drawn from the same original; whether the original was of "ferthest Norfolk" or of Trumpington, or of some other part of England, the result is not a type but a typical individual.

The discussion of the realistic treatment of characters in the tales, as distinct from the pilgrims themselves, does not lie within the plan of the present inquiry. But having pointed out the similarity of the Miller of the *Prologue* to the miller of the Reeve's Tale, one may perhaps be pardoned for calling attention to the astonishing portrait of the

wife of the miller of Trumpington. She is certainly no artificially constructed type, but a living and highly individualized person—the daughter of "the persoun of the toun," excessively proud of

hir kynrede and hir nortelrye
That she hadde lerned in the nonerye.

And the twenty-year old daughter, if not depicted from actual observation, is at least drawn with a clear comprehension of the doctrines of heredity. She is the living image of her father—even to her "camuse nose."

On the basis of these evidences of definite observation, we may ask why Chaucer placed the *Reeve's Tale* at Trumpington, and what foundation of reality underlies its abundant local color. Sir Roger de Trumpington was a member of the king's household and his wife, Lady Blanche, was closely associated with Philippa Chaucer as lady-in-waiting to Constance of Castile. From them or one of them the poet may well have heard facts and incidents supplementing his own possible acquaintance with the place. But the connection of the Trumpingtons seems hardly

adequate to determine the localization of the Tale. The earls of Pembroke also had lands in the immediate neighborhood of Trumpington, but they had lands in too many parts of England to allow us to attach any special significance to this fact. It seems rather that we must look in other directions for the explanation.

The choice of Cambridge was no doubt connected with the choice of college boys as the chief actors in the intrigue and of Cambridge as the university to supply the boys. No doubt the Cambridge of the *Reeve's Tale* is the artistic balance of the Oxford of the *Miller's Tale*, but behind the decision to use the university in either tale there may lie a motive capable of more or less positive definition.

The attention of court circles had certainly been specially focussed upon the two universities by the meeting of the king's council at Oxford in July, 1388, and that of parliament at Cambridge in September of that same year. That Chaucer was present on either occasion it is not necessary to suppose. The accuracy of the local color in both the Oxford and the Cambridge story sufficiently attests his

familiarity with both places. What is perhaps of importance is that many of the persons for whom he wrote had recently visited these places under conditions of special interest and were the more ready to enjoy stories connected with them. That both council meeting and parliament were dominated by the Gloucester faction may have lent the stories an added zest for the adherents of John of Gaunt and the king.

Cambridge, and particularly the King's Hall there—which figures in Chaucer's story as Soler Hall—had also a permanent claim upon the interest at least of the king; for it was the college at which he supported a number of scholars by special grants, which appear regularly in his household accounts.

This is not the proper occasion to discuss the realistic local color of the Oxford and Cambridge stories; but I cannot refrain from pointing out that Professor Skeat was not justified in suggesting that "Chaucer must have thought Trumpington somewhat further from Cambridge than it really is, as he actually makes the clerks to have been benighted there." Surely the early closing of the college gates motivates the incident.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, II

THE SUMMONER, THE FRIAR, AND THE PARDONER

The enmity between the Summoner and the Friar, like that of the Miller and the Reeve, is apparently represented, not as having arisen after the pilgrims met at the Tabard, but as having been a feud of long standing. In origin, we are perhaps to conceive, it was not a personal but a professional or class feeling. Jealousy between the regular and the secular clergy was traditional. The houses and persons of the friars were not subject to the jurisdiction of diocesan officials. The Friar says:

> For we been out of his correccioun,
> They han of us no jurisdiccioun.

The freedom enjoyed by the friar would naturally have been resented by the archdeacon, whose special function was the disci-

pline of the diocese, and the sentiments of the archdeacon would naturally have been shared by the summoner, who was the bailiff of the archdeacon's court. To this class-jealousy and enmity may have been added some temperamental difficulties developed by casual contacts as the Summoner and the Friar went about their district on their respective business. Many of the Friar's friends must have complained bitterly of the manner in which they had been treated by the Summoner, and the Summoner and his associates may more than once have been tricked or balked with the aid of the Friar.

In the *Prologue* Chaucer does not tell us from what part of England either the Summoner or the Friar comes, but it is significant that later each of them, in telling a tale intended to illustrate the shady character of the other, places the scene of his tale in the North. The district indicated is one which was probably familiar to Chaucer either from his stay at Hatfield (Yorkshire) in his youth or from later visits by himself and his wife to his wife's sister, Katherine Swynford, who spent much of her time at her country houses

in Lincolnshire at Kettlethorpe, Grantham, and other manors.

The scene of the *Summoner's Tale* is very definitely localized. The events occur, the narrator tells us, in Yorkshire in "a mersshy contree called Holdernesse." The friar who is the protagonist of the tale is not a Cistercian, as has been suggested; the point of the tale depends upon his being a member of the same order as the Friar with whom the Summoner was quarreling, and whom the scurrilous anecdote of the Summoner's prologue certainly proves to have been a Franciscan. As there was at this time only one Franciscan house in the district of Holderness, we may safely infer that Chaucer's readers would have understood him to have that one in mind. It was situated in Beverley, the most important town of the district and the seat of the archdeacon of the East Riding. Furthermore contemporary records show that the Grey Friars of Beverley were at this very time collecting money to repair and enlarge their buildings as the two friars in the tale are represented as doing. According to the *Victoria County History of*

Yorkshire, the friary at Beverley, founded in 1267, fell into decay about 1340 and remained almost uninhabited until Sir John Hotham, of Scorbrough, near Leconfield, almost entirely rebuilt it. In 1352 he gave the convent half an acre of land in Beverley, and the benefactions of the Hotham family continued until in the reign of Edward IV the Hothams were regarded as founders of the house. In 1356 Friar John Botiler came to the guild hall of Beverley and obtained leave to take sand in Westwood for building purposes.

The Friar does not name a definite place as the scene of his tale. He does, however, tell us in a general way that the events occurred "in my contree," and near a town where dwelt an archdeacon. That the scene actually lay in the North, not far at any rate from Yorkshire, is indicated by the language. Chaucer clearly makes in the tales of the Summoner and the Friar a definite attempt to use dialect for the production of a sense of reality, just as he had done in the dialect spoken by Alan and John in the *Reeve's Tale.* He does this, not by writing the tales in dia-

lect throughout, but by introducing into the dialogue words which distinctly belong to the dialect and subtly create an atmosphere and a background. Of such words there are decidedly more in the tale of the Summoner and the Friar than have been noted as northern by the editors. Such words are "Brock" and "Scott," the names of the carter's horses; "hayt," the word used to urge them to their utmost efforts; "tholed;" "caples," the term used by the Summoner for the carter's horses, and the form "thou lixt." That Chaucer is consciously realistic in these details is indicated by the fact that northern words and forms appear scarcely at all in his writings except when the speakers are from the North or the North Midland. The tales of the Reeve and those of the Summoner and the Friar are notable in this respect.

A reason for special interest on the part of Chaucer's audience in these tales of the Summoner and the Friar, if not the motive for his location of them, may be found in the fact that the attention of all England had recently been focussed upon the district by a quarrel and ecclesiastical controversy in which several

members of the court circle were definitely involved, one of whom was the archdeacon of Lincoln. The quarrel arose between the canons of Beverley Minster and Alexander Neville, archbishop of York, whose jurisdiction they denied. It began in 1381, and, according to most authorities, was settled by the king on St. Valentine's Day, 1386. Details of the quarrel are given in the *Beverley Chapter Book*, edited by H. F. Leach for the Surtees Society.

The control of the collegiate church of St. John the Evangelist of Beverley was largely in the hands of seven canons. There were also a precentor, a chancellor, and a sacrist or treasurer, but they took rank below the canons and had no voice in chapter. Naturally the canons felt their power and neglected their duties. In Chaucer's day nearly all of them held offices in London in connection with the court and the government. When in 1381 Alexander Neville, the archbishop of York, attempted to hold a visitation of the church, he was merely continuing his attempts to usurp the privileges of the chapter. His claims rested solely upon the assumption that

because he held a corrody in the church he became the ranking official and could exercise jurisdiction as its head. Praiseworthy, therefore, as may have been his attempt to enforce residence, it was unsuccessful.

With the details of the controversy we are not concerned, but it may be worth while to record the careers at court of some of the canons, as indicating the interest which would have been aroused by any tale professedly dealing with events in their country and having at least a slanting reference to their troubles.

The most prominent of them in the scandal was Richard de Ravenser, king's clerk. In 1357 he was clerk of the hanaper, and from 1362 to 1386, a master in Chancery. In 1358 he administered the estate of Queen Isabella and later was privy purse to Queen Philippa, whom he regarded as his special patron. He is undoubtedly the Richard de Beverley of the *Life Records*, whom Chaucer must have known well. He appears there also, 1 Sept. 1369, as Richard de Ravenser, clerk, next after Henry Snaith, the keeper of the wardrobe, heading the list

of thirteen clerks to whom were given "six ells of black cloth" for the funeral of Queen Philippa. Already in December 1368 he had been listed as Richard de Beuerle among the "clercz a pellure," and on 26 July 1377 he paid Chaucer for his robes and his wine pension. On Feb. 19, 1386 he is recorded among the canons present at Lincoln when Henry of Derby, Sir Thomas de Swyneford, and Philippa Chaucer, among others, were admitted to the fraternity of Lincoln Cathedral. At this time he was archdeacon of Lincoln. It is clear that Chaucer knew him; whether they were on friendly terms may be left for future consideration.

Another of the Beverley canons was John of Wellingborough, king's clerk, and probably the John Wenlingbourne who in 1369 received a hundred shillings toward war costs when Chaucer received ten pounds. He is said to have borne the king's privy seal at one time. In the Beverley quarrel he stood out with Ravenser against the archbishop so vigorously that they were excommunicated.

A third canon was Henry Snaith, keeper of the king's wardrobe in 1369. In his will,

dated 3 Feb. 1381, he names Richard Ravenser and Walter Skirlaw, another Beverley canon, as his executors.

Equally prominent with Ravenser was Walter Skirlaw. He was master in Chancery, canon of York, dean of St. Martin's le Grand, London, sacrist of Lincoln, and archdeacon of Northampton, and in 1370 an LL.D. of Oxford. In 1378 he had the privy seal. In 1380 he was archdeacon of the East Riding, in 1385 bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and in 1388 bishop of Durham. He was often sent by the king on missions to the continent. He is mentioned in the *Life Records* among the commissioners sent to France in 1377 and 1378 to treat for peace and for the marriage of Richard to a daughter of Charles V. It seems altogether likely that Chaucer met him then, if not on other occasions.

The fifth canon was William of Birstall, king's clerk, almost certainly the one who in 1378 drew up the letter for Gower and Forester to act as Chaucer's attorneys while he was abroad. He was also a master in Chancery, and in 1371 master of the rolls.

Of these canons two, Richard de Ravenser, or Beverley, and Walter Skirlaw, are interesting both because they were closely associated with Chaucer and because both became archdeacons in the districts covered by the tales under discussion. Ravenser succeeded William of Wykeham as archdeacon of Lincoln in 1368 and held the office until his death in 1386. That Skirlaw was archdeacon both of Northampton and of the East Riding is certain; but the dates are not clear. According to Le Neve, he was archdeacon of Northampton 1381-1386 and of the East Riding in 1370 and 1385.

Leaving this problem for a moment, let us consider another matter, closely connected with it. The opening lines of the *Friar's Tale* describe at length the character and habits of an archdeacon "of heigh degree" in the Friar's country, who was severe in punishing crimes—especially when the punishment yielded money—and who was the Summoner's master. The definiteness of the description suggests the possibility that Chaucer had in mind some particular person. As there were never many archdeacons, and as the

territory is confined to the North Country, the search for one whom Chaucer may have satirized is narrowly limited. In Le Neve's lists between 1360 and 1400, for all dioceses north of London, there are just three names that fit the case at all: Ravenser, Skirlaw, and Alexander Neville, archdeacon of Durham, 1371-74 (error for 1369-71, according to the *D. N. B.*), and archbishop of York, 1374-88.

Before deciding which has the best claim to have been the model, it is worth while to ask whether the passage in Chaucer is ironical or not. The answer to this question will help to determine whether or not the archdeacon was really or ironically "of heigh degree." The image of the bishop catching the people "with his hook" and of the archdeacon "beating him to it," in view of the fact that the tale is going to show how the Summoner outdid the archdeacon, leaves no doubt as to the ironical intent. Chaucer's archdeacon, then, was probably of obscure origin. But Alexander Neville was brother of John, fifth lord Neville of Raby; consequently he came from one of the oldest and proudest fami-

lies in the North. Both Ravenser and Skirlaw were of obscure origin, as will appear.

But Neville is out of the race for other reasons. For one thing, he was archdeacon long before Chaucer wrote and for only a short time; his district was too far from the Friar's country; he was until 1388 one of the most intimate councillors of the king; and his brother, Sir William Neville, knight of the king's chamber, was one of those who stood by Chaucer in the Cecilia Chaumpaigne case in 1380. These last two points can be met. The two brothers can hardly have been on good terms: the archbishop persecuted the Wyclifites; Sir William was one of their strong supporters; the archbishop fled into exile from the lords appellants; Sir William was given charge of some of their prisoners. Moreover, it must be admitted that the tyranny of the archdeacon corresponds to the tyranny of the archbishop, by whom the canons of Beverley were persecuted—and evidently other persons also, for a libel on him, quoted in the rolls of parliament, declared that England was not governed by King Richard but by King Alexander. But

these points do not outweigh the difficulties as to time and place and the sudden introduction of truth into the ironical passage if Neville is meant.

Skirlaw, born at South Skirlaw, Yorkshire, about eight miles northeast of Hull, is said on doubtful authority to have been the son of a sieve-maker and to have run away from home to study at Oxford. How he made his way we are not told; no patron is mentioned. His will shows him to have accumulated enormous wealth; but with its nine codicils it shows a painful anxiety to do justice to everyone that does not suggest the type of man described by the Friar. Moreover, he was a great builder and a generous benefactor in his lifetime to Durham College, Oxford. His humility appears in his will, and he has been well described as "a pious and humble prelate, whose name is transmitted to posterity only by his works of charity and magnificence."

For the case of Ravenser, the initial difficulty—that he did not, strictly speaking, belong to the Friar's country—disappears upon reflection. The Friar did not say that the

archdeacon was of his diocese, but merely of his part of England. The diocese of Lincoln extends to the Humber within perhaps ten miles of Beverley. Is it not quite as natural that the Friar should poke fun at the Summoner of a neighboring archdeacon as at one of his own? When the Summoner in his rage retaliates, he, quite as naturally, places the Friar in the district of Holderness, where he belongs.

However this may be, a strong bit of evidence for Lincoln as against York lies in the fact that Chaucer makes the Friar think of the archdeacon's master as a bishop, whereas in the East Riding of Yorkshire he would have been the archbishop himself.

Of the details of Ravenser's career and of his character not much is recorded; a few inferences may be drawn. As the son of William Bakester (qy. a baker?) of Ravenser-Odd, near Hull, he evidently began life in humble circumstances. It is said that he owed his preferment to William de la Pole the younger (died 1366); but the statement may be merely an inference from the fact that the Poles carried on part of their business at

Ravenser's birthplace. He was certainly a believer in pluralities. Besides his legal and court positions named above, he had a prebend in Lincoln in 1357, prebends in Hereford and St. Paul's in 1361; in 1363, a prebend in Lincoln, which he exchanged for one in St. Martin's, Beverley; in 1371, a prebend in York; and in 1384 he obtained another prebend in Lincoln. In 1359 he was archdeacon of Norfolk, but he cannot have held the office long, as William Swinflet obtained it in 1361 and held it until 1387. Before 1360 he was rector of Waltham (Lincs.), exchanging then to become provost of Beverley. In 1365 he was made master of St. Leonard's Hospital, York, and kept the position until his death. In 1371 he was made one of the triers of petitions in parliament, and so continued until his death. All these offices, with his canonry in Beverley and his position as archdeacon of Lincoln, were enough to occupy a dozen men and must have brought him an enormous income. As early as 1369 he was able to lend the king £200, which was duly repaid the next year. His wealth notwithstanding, there is re-

corded only one expenditure for charitable purposes and that in company with Walter Skirlaw and Robert de Beverley, when the three provided for the support of a chantry in St. Michael's Church, Beverley. Consequently when he came to make his will, he was able to make spectacular donations to persons and to institutions. They fill five pages of text, and the inventory of his possessions fills ten more. If we may not infer from this that he was such a greedy prelate as Chaucer describes, at least it is certain that he made out of his various offices, which he could not possibly have discharged with proper attention to each, a large amount of money, which he did not redistribute in his lifetime. That the archdeaconry of Lincoln would have been one of the most profitable sources of his income is certain, and in his later years he seems to have lived chiefly at Lincoln and in his neighboring manor of Stretton.

Besides his doubtful connection with William de la Pole before 1366, there was a certain connection between him and Michael de la Pole in May-June, 1377 and again in

February-March, 1386, when he twice had charge of the great seal during the Chancellor's absence.

Ravenser's connection with de la Pole and also with Chaucer reminds us of Chaucer's probable connection with the de la Poles. Its probability lies in the fact that the early de la Poles, the brothers, Richard and William (I), were, like Chaucer's forbears, gaugers of wines and king's butlers. Although there is no evidence of close connection until Chaucer's granddaughter in 1430 married William de la Pole, earl and later duke of Suffolk, de la Pole, the chancellor, belonged to the group of the king's friends, Alexander Neville, Simon Burley, and Nicholas Brembre, with two of whom and the brother of the third Chaucer had intimate dealings. It is safe at least to assume on Chaucer's part familiarity with the status, character, and home of the family—which is all that my argument needs.

This granted, let us return to the *Summoner's Tale*. The limiters described are certainly Franciscans. If they belong to Holderness, they must, as has already been

said, come from Beverley. One of them first preaches in a church and they take up a collection. The church is not in the country, for the two friars then go begging from door to door. It is not in Beverley, for they plan to spend the night in an inn in some town near by. When the friar of whom the tale is told is driven from the farmer's house he goes with his complaint "down to the court" where there lived "a man of greet honour," whose confessor he was, who was lord of "that village."

Professor Kuhl has argued that this lord was Sir Peter de Bukton, who had manors in that region, but the claims of Bukton seem hardly as strong as those of Michael de la Pole. Until the end of 1386, the de la Poles were the greatest lords in Holderness. They had four houses in Hull and many manors in Yorkshire as well as in other counties. But for the use of the word *village*, I should suggest that the friars, having preached in a village down on the southeastern point of Holderness and finding themselves too far from Beverley to return the same day, planned to spend the night in Hull. If, for instance,

they had preached in Patrington and begged their way going toward Hull, the story might well have brought the hero to the "court" of de la Pole at Hull. But the word *village* makes one of his manors more appropriate. At least the fact should be mentioned that as early as 1338 when Edward III was feeling very grateful to William de la Pole (I) for a loan of 11,000*l.* and the underwriting of 7500*l.* more, he not only bestowed upon him many manors but gave him "the lordship of Holderness."

These facts are of course only a beginning at the interpretation of the tales. They do not prove that Ravenser was the butt of Chaucer's satire of a greedy archdeacon; they merely make him a possible candidate for the position. They do show that Chaucer must have had many associations with the district, out of which his stories could have grown. If we can believe—and though this is not proved, all the evidence seems to tend to this conclusion—that Chaucer wrote his stories not for the world in general and not for patrons, in hope of preferment, but as a source of in-

terest and amusement for his friends, then we may see in this rough handling of a rascally summoner and his equally unscrupulous master and in the vulgar jest on the greed and humiliation of a Franciscan friar material of special appeal to the de la Poles. Was Ravenser ungrateful to his patron's family? He orders prayers for the souls of the two queens and of all his "benefactors" but he does not name William de la Pole. Nor does he leave any bequest to Michael de la Pole, who was chancellor when he died, although he leaves to someone else a "robe of the chancellor's livery." Only two months before he himself had exercised the Chancellor's office, as I have shown. The omission is surely very odd. Walter Skirlaw, who is not supposed to have owed his rise to de la Pole, but who was associated with the chancellor in his embassy of 1386, has come down as making a speech in parliament in de la Pole's honor at the time when the earldom was bestowed; but there is no indication that Ravenser ever made any return or showed any kindness to the family. Was there some

special matter concerning Franciscans by reason of which the de la Pole foundation outside Hull, begun as a Maison Dieu by the second William, was finally bestowed upon the Carmelites? Were the de la Poles as a family of the bourgeois type? The chancellor himself at least was sneered at by his enemies of noble blood as a merchant and not fit to be an earl. He died before the tale is supposed to have been written. But was his son Michael of the same stamp? Perhaps we shall never be able to answer such questions as these. We wander in a maze of possibilities and probabilities. Shall we ever find the truth at the centre?

The Pardoner

If the reader entertains any doubt concerning the personal satire in the treatment of the Summoner and the Friar and the tales they tell, he will hardly be able, I think, to resist the evidence that in portraying the Summoner's "freend and compeer," the Pardoner of Rouncival, Chaucer must be admitted to have described a person who could not fail

to be immediately recognized by those for whom he wrote. It is true that the pardoners of Rouncival were a common object of satire, and that they remained active for more than a century; the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester, for 1536-7 contain entries of payments from pardoners for the privilege of selling indulgences: "Received of two pardoners viij *d*; of a pardoner of St. Chad, ij *d*; of a pardoner of Our Lady Rounsevale, iiij *d*." But they were by no means the only pardoners available for Chaucer's satire. The *Piers Plowman* poems signalize:

Pieres the pardonere of Paulines doctrine;

and Friar Daw Topias lists two others with those of Rouncival:

I trowe thou menys the pardonystres
Of seint Thomas of Acres,
Of Antoun, or of Runcevale,
That rennen so faste aboute.

Chaucer's reasons for choosing a pardoner of Rouncival are, however, not difficult to discover. In the first place, Rouncival means, in this connection, not the distant convent of

Nuestra Señora de Roncesvalles in Navarre, but the cell of that convent (a hospital and chapel) founded by William Marshall the younger, earl of Pembroke, in 1229, at Charing, just outside London. The convent possessed a wedge-shaped piece of land fronting the river and extending back to the roadway between London and Westminster. The frontage upon the open space where Charing Cross stood (now occupied by the statue of King Charles I) was more extensive than that facing the river. The position and extent of the chapel and other buildings are shown in Wyngaerde's well-known sketch and in an interesting drawing in the Gardner collection (at the Guildhall) both reproduced in Sir James Galloway's *The Story of St. Mary Roncevall.* The nearness of the Hospital of Our Lady of Rouncival to Westminster and its consequent familiarity to Chaucer's readers needs no emphasis.

But this was not the only reason why members of the court circle at least would have been interested in any reference to Rouncival. After the Black Death, the Hospital, which

previously had been very prosperous, had few brethren left to uphold its interests and its affairs fell into great confusion. It attracted the attention of the crown as affording opportunities of preferment for the clerks of the chapel royal and the royal household.

In 1379 the Chapel and lands were seized under the statute "for the forfeiture of the lands of schismatic aliens," and on May 8, 1382, the wardenship was conferred on one of the king's clerks, Nicholas Slake. He, it seems, had no aversion to pluralities, being prebendary of the chapel of St. George, Windsor, of Wenlakesbarn, of Erdington in Bridgenorth, of Shirecote in Tamworth, of the royal free chapel of Hastings, and rector of St. Mary Abchurch. In 1391 he was appointed archdeacon of Wells and in 1396 dean of St. Stephen's Chapel Royal, Westminster. Slake is further known to history because he was one of the three persons captured by the citizens in 1399 in a vain effort to get hold of the king when Henry of Derby was about to seize the throne.

Slake's possession of the wardenship of Rouncival did not long remain unquestioned.

The prior and brethren of Roncesvalles appear to have commenced a process to regain their property and on 23 April, 1383, it was restored to the prior after an inquisition held by John de Neuenton, formerly king's escheator for the county of Middlesex. In 1389, at the supplication of the king's kinsman, Charles of Navarre, one Garcias, a canon of Roncesvalles, was ratified as "warden of the Chapel of Roncival by Charyncroix," but —unless the Chapel had been separated from the Hospital—his tenure was brief, for in 1390 a patent roll records John Hadham, the king's clerk, as "warden of the Hospital of St. Mary of Ronsyvale by Charryng by Westminster," and he was succeeded on September 11, 1393, by John Gedney, Chaucer's successor as clerk of the king's works.

An additional reason for Chaucer's interest in Rouncival and its pardoners was that John of Gaunt was one of the patrons of the Hospital. In 1372 he gave letters of introduction to three of its "procureurs" to ecclesiastics of the realm who were to further them in their collection of alms for the Hospital.

The history of the Chapel and Hospital of

St. Mary of Rouncival, however interesting, must not detain us now. It may be read in the volume by Sir James Galloway cited above and in the late Canon Westlake's *History of Parish Gilds*, to both of which I am much indebted. Our principal concern is with the pardoners representing or professing to represent the Hospital.

Only two months after his appointment as warden, Nicholas Slake secured from the king a writ of aid (dated 18 July 1382) for Ralph Archer, his proctor, to arrest and bring before the king and council all persons whom he shall prove to have collected alms in the realm as proctor of the Hospital and converted the same to their own use. Again in 1387 there seems to have been an outbreak of unauthorized sale of pardons, and we are told by H. C. Lea in his *History of Indulgences* that the sale of pardons flourished with especial vigor after the Jubilee Year 1390. "During 1391 and the following years he [Boniface IX] granted Jubilee indulgences to churches and cities throughout Italy and Germany until there was no place so small that had not enjoyed them." There

is every reason to believe that England also got her share.

Whether the Pardoner of the Canterbury group was duly authorized to collect for the Hospital, retaining a part of his gatherings for his own enrichment or was one of the pretenders referred to above is not entirely clear. Many Chaucer scholars seem to hold that his bulls were forgeries and that he made no report to anyone, but Chaucer gives us, I think, no reason to believe this, and as pardons could be bought wholesale by the pardoners at about a penny apiece there seems no sufficient reason why his traffic may not have been entirely legal and authorized. Yet we must remember that Chaucer was writing for contemporaries thoroughly familiar with the facts and that his statements are often not to be taken at their face value but ironically. We ourselves can recognize the irony in his encomiums on the Doctor of Physic, the Reeve, the Summoner, the Cook, and several others among the pilgrims. It is possible therefore that the Pardoner's pardons had not actually "come from Rome al hoot," but were as spurious as were his relics.

It may be that the Pardoner's faculty of preaching marked him out for special recognition. Not all pardoners, or quaestors, were allowed to preach. Indeed there are several canons, dating from early in the thirteenth century to far beyond Chaucer's time, which specifically prohibit from preaching all quaestors, with the exception of friars and others specially found and declared fit for that function. The Chapel and Hospital of Rouncival, like the mother house, were under the Augustinian rule, and we are apt to think that because he preached the Pardoner must have been in holy orders; but there are several reasons for thinking that Chaucer's Pardoner, if in holy orders at all, was certainly in very minor ones. He does not appear to have observed the tonsure, which was strongly insisted upon not only for priests but also for deacons, and according to his statement to the Wife of Bath he "was aboute to wedde a wyf." We need not believe that he really had any such intention, but at least neither that expert in matrimony nor any of the other pilgrims expressed any doubt that he had the right to do so, and the author of the *Tale of*

Beryn—who, though not authoritative, may be taken as representing public opinion—does not hesitate to represent him as proposing marriage—perhaps not seriously—to the tapster of the inn at Canterbury. Originally indulgences had been granted only through the clergy, but the practice of using laymen as collectors grew, and St. Thomas Aquinas boldly pronounced indulgences not to be sacramental but purely matters of jurisdiction.

On the whole, the evidence seems to indicate that so striking a person as the Pardoner, with his long flaxen hair, his new Italian fashions, and his glaring eyes must have been nearly as familiar to Chaucer's readers as was Rouncival itself, which they passed daily as they journeyed between London and Westminster.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, III

THE MAN OF LAW AND THE FRANKLIN

Scarcely any American reader of Chaucer has any accurate and definite conception of the representative of the legal profession, the Sergeant of the Law, as Chaucer calls him. Most of us rest content with regarding him vaguely as a lawyer, without at all realizing that the term used by Chaucer implies a very special type and grade. The reasons for our vagueness in this matter are principally two. In the first place, we have in America no such distinctions between the members of the legal profession as exist even today in England. We do recognize particular officials, such as city attorneys, district attorneys, and attorneys-general, but the members of our bar are not divided into distinct classes. In England there still exists a distinction between barristers and solicitors. There is a

special class of barristers known as king's counsel, and the ancient grade and class of sergeants at law existed until 1845, though in greatly diminished numbers and splendor. It is perhaps excusable that we in America should fail to feel the special significance of the term by which Chaucer has designated the man of law, but certainly English commentators and students of Chaucer, who are, or ought to be, familiar with the different grades and classes of the legal profession, should have taken more pains than they have to set forth the meaning of the term and to illustrate the character and functions of the sergeant of the law. It may perhaps be felt that Chaucer himself has been guilty of contributory negligence in that he has used the colorless term "man of law" instead of the accurate designation "sergeant of the law" upon the occasion when this pilgrim is called upon by the host to do his share in the entertainment of the company.

As named and described in the *Prologue*, the Sergeant of the Law is not only a very definite, but even a very distinguished, member of society. The usual form of his desig-

nation is sergeant at law; Latin, *serviens ad legem.* The order is of immemorial antiquity. Dugdale, writing in 1666, says that if Coke is correct in regard to the date of *The Mirror of Justices,* the order of sergeants at law can claim an antiquity of more than eleven hundred years. Coke was not correct about the date, but the order had certainly existed long prior to the Statute of Westminster in the third year of Edward I (1275), for in that statute provisions are made for the regulation of abuses that had been of long standing.

Briefly stated, the sergeants at law were such of the most eminent pleaders practicing in the king's courts, as had been chosen for their special attainments and summoned to that rank and grade by a writ from the king. According to the *Peerages* of Burke and Debrett, they ranked socially immediately after knights bachelors and took precedence of Companions of the Bath, younger sons of knights, and even younger sons of great nobles. Professionally, they ranked immediately after the judges of the king's bench and common pleas and took precedence of

both the attorney-general and the solicitor-general and also the barons of the exchequer, except the chief. Fortescue, Dugdale, and almost all succeeding writers have called special attention to the fact that they are not required to remove their head-covering, the coif, even in the presence of the king, and Whitelock, in a panegyric of the order, points out that the king himself in the writ addressed to one of them uses the respectful plural *vos* instead of the *tu* and *te* commonly used in addressing officials and other inferiors. Not even the sheriffs, who in ancient times were officials of very great dignity, are addressed in royal writs with the honorific *vos*.

As would naturally be inferred, the sergeants at law have always been few in number. In his *Lives of the Judges of England* Foss prints lists of the sergeants based upon the work of Dugdale and Wynne. For the whole of the long reign of Edward III only forty-eight sergeants are listed, and twenty-eight of these are designated as having been withdrawn from the number by appointment as judges. For the reign of Richard II Foss

lists only fifteen sergeants, all but two of whom were later appointed judges. Foss's lists are incomplete, but they represent with essential accuracy the high standing of the sergeants and the limited number of them available to Chaucer as a model for his man of law. In a famous account of the sergeants, which I shall quote in a moment from Sir John Fortescue, we are told that they were appointed in groups of seven or eight at a time. This may have been true for the second half of the fifteenth century when Fortescue wrote. Somewhat later, in the thirteenth year of Henry VIII, as many as ten were appointed at once, but the largest number appointed at one time in Chaucer's day seems to have been three.

The classic account of the sergeants and the manner of their appointment is the passage I have just mentioned, which forms Chapter L of Sir John Fortescue's treatise in praise of the laws of England, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae.* It should be borne in mind that this was written not merely by one of the most famous and learned of England's judges, but by a man whose study of the law

began within thirteen or fourteen years after the death of Chaucer, and who himself attained the rank and grade of sergeant of the law less than thirty years after Chaucer's death. This famous chapter reads, in translation, as follows:

But, my Prince, since you are so desirous to know, wherefore, in the Laws of England, the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor are not conferred, as in the professions of the Canon and Civil Law in our Universities, I would give you to understand, that though in our Inns of Court there be no degrees which bear those titles, yet there is in them conferred a degree, or rather an Honorary Estate, no less celebrated and solemn than that of Doctor, which is called the degree of a Serjeant at Law. It is conferred in the following manner.

The Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, by and with the advice and consent of all the Judges, is wont to pitch upon, as often as he sees fitting, seven or eight of the discreeter persons, such as have made the greatest proficiency in the general study of the laws, and whom they judge best qualified. The manner is, to deliver in their names in writing to the Lord High Chancellor of Eng-

land; who, in virtue of the King's Writ, shall forthwith command every one of the persons so pitched upon, that he be before the King, at a day certain, to take upon him the *state* and *degree* of a Serjeant at Law, under a great penalty, in every one of the said Writs specified and limited.

At which day, the parties summoned and appearing, each of them shall be sworn upon the holy Gospels, that he will be ready, at a further day and place to be appointed, to take upon him the *state* and *degree* of a Serjeant at Law, and that he shall, at the same time, give *gold*, as, according to the custom of the realm, has in such cases been used and accustomed to be done. How each is to behave and demean himself, the particulars of the ceremony, and manner how these estates and degrees are to be conferred and received, I forbear to insert; it will take up a larger description than consists with such a succinct discourse, besides, at other times, I have talked it over to you in our common conversation. But I desire that you should know, that, at the time and place appointed, those who are so chosen, hold a sumptuous feast, like that of a Coronation, which is to continue for seven days together: neither shall any one of the new-created Serjeants be at a less expense, suitable to the solemnity of his creation, than

one thousand six hundred scutes [present value $24,000] and upwards, whereby the expenses in the whole, which the eight will be at, will exceed twelve thousand eight hundred scutes [present value $192,000]. To make up which, one article is, every one shall make presents of gold rings to the value, in the whole, of forty pounds [at the least] English money [present value $3,600]. I very well remember, when I took upon me the *state* and *degree* of a Serjeant at Law, that my bill for gold rings came to fifty pounds [present value $4,500]. Each Serjeant, at the time of his creation, gives to every Prince of the Blood, to every Duke, and to each Archbishop, who shall be present at the solemnity, to the Lord High Chancellor, and to the Treasurer of England; to each a ring of the value of eight scutes [$120]; to every Earl and Bishop, to the Keeper of the Privy Seal, to each Chief Justice, to the Chief Baron of the King's Exchequer, a ring worth six scutes; and to every other Lord of Parliament, to every Abbot and to every Prelate of distinction, to every worshipful Knight, then and there present, to the Master of the Rolls, and to every Justice, a ring to the value of four scutes; to each Baron of the Exchequer, to the Chamberlains, and to all the great men at court then

in waiting on the King, rings of a less value, in proportion to their rank and quality: so that there will not be the meanest clerk, especially in the Court of Common Pleas, but that he will receive a ring convenient for his degree. Besides, they usually make presents of rings to several of their friends and acquaintance. They give also liveries of cloth, of the same piece and colour, which are distributed in great quantities, not only to their *menial servants,* but to several others, their friends and acquaintance, who attended and waited on the solemnity of their creation; wherefore, though in the Universities, they who are advanced to the degree of Doctors are at no small expense at their creation, in giving *round caps* and other considerable presents: yet they do not give any gold, or presents of like value: neither are at any expenses in proportion with a Serjeant at Law.

There is not, in any other kingdom or state, any particular degree conferred on the practicers of the law *as such;* unless it be in the kingdom of England. Neither does it happen, that in any other country, an Advocate enriches himself so much by his practice as a Serjeant at Law. No one, be he never so well read and practiced in the laws, can be made a Judge in the Courts of King's Bench, or the Common Pleas, which are the

supreme ordinary courts of the kingdom, unless he be first called to be a Serjeant at Law: neither is any one, beside a Serjeant, permitted to plead in the Court of Common Pleas, where all real actions are pleaded: wherefore, to this day, no one hath been advanced to the *state* and *degree* of a Serjeant at Law, till he hath been first a Student, and a Barrister, full sixteen years: every Serjeant wears in Court a *white silk coif,* which is a badge that they are *graduates in law,* and is *the chief ensign of habit* with which Serjeants at Law are distinguished at their creation. Neither shall a Judge, or a Serjeant at Law, take off the said *coif* though he be in the Royal Presence and talking with the King's Majesty.

Fortescue's comparison of the great dinner given by the sergeants in connection with the ceremonies of creation to the feast of a king's coronation is apparently no exaggeration of the facts. Dugdale printed descriptions of four of these dinners of a somewhat later date, and in connection with two gave detailed accounts, not only of the expenses, but also of the bills of fare. The ceremonies seem usually to have lasted five days with

elaborate ceremonies on each day, including an oration on the duties and responsibilities and honors of sergeantry, a solemn reading of the writs of summons, official investment with the white coifs and scarlet hoods which were the special insignia of the sergeants, presentation of rings on behalf of the new sergeants to the large number of persons entitled to receive them, offerings at various shrines, and finally the assignment of each of the new sergeants to his place of public consultation in the parvis or porch of St. Paul's. At the creation of sergeants in the nineteenth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, five persons received rings from all the sergeants in common, varying from one worth perhaps $250 to the queen to one worth $45 to the warden of the Fleet, and fifty other rings were given by each sergeant separately, varying in value from a ring of the value of $65 to the lord keeper of the great seal to cheap rings of about $10 each to minor employees of the courts. In addition to the rings, the liveries given by the new sergeants ranged from four yards of parti-colored cloth at $37.50 a yard to a yard and a half of ordinary cloth to each

of the ten porters. The list of recipients of liveries fills three columns of Dugdale's folio pages.

It is difficult to give any conception of the magnificence and profusion of the great feast, but perhaps some idea may be gained from a list of the beasts and birds slaughtered for the feast we have just been considering. There were twenty-five beeves, one hundred fat muttons, fifty-one great veals, thirty-four porks, ninety-one pigs, nineteen and a half dozen capons, twenty-one dozen and nine cocks, an uncounted number of pullets, thirty-seven dozen pigeons, fourteen dozen swans, and three hundred and forty larks. At the sergeants' feast in 1555 the proportion of two messes of meat prepared for the table of the lords of the privy council and certain Spanish lords and gentlemen is even more astonishing. The table was ornamented with a model in wax representing the court of common pleas and for each mess of four persons there was provided: a shield of brawn, two capons boiled in white broth, one roasted swan, one roasted bustard, two chewet pies, two pikes, two roasted capons, two large baked

The Court of King's Bench
(From a fifteenth-century manuscript in the library of the Inner Temple)

venison pasties, two herns and bitterns, two roasted phesants, and two custards. At the second course there was another artificial construction in wax, perhaps representing the court of king's bench, and the food provided consisted of one dozen jellies, one crane, six partridges, two pasties of red deer, a large jowl of sturgeon, twelve woodcocks and plovers, four baked quince pies, six young rabbits, six snipes, one and one half dozen larks, and one marchpane. After this, one is not surprised to learn that the total cost of this feast was 667*l.* 7*s.* 7*d.*, which equals a present purchasing value of about $50,000.

As to the robes of the sergeants, they, like the robes of the judges, were very splendid and rich in color. The robes of modern judges and advocates in England are black, and it has been jocosely said that the court went into mourning at the death of Queen Anne and has never come out. Chief Justice Fortescue tells us that in his day the ordinary dress of the sergeant at law was a long priest-like robe with a cape about the shoulders furred with lamb skin, a hood with two labels such as doctors of the law wear in the

universities, and a white coif of silk. As to the colors of the robes, Sir William Dugdale informs us that in his day there were three, which he names as murrey, which seems the same as what we call maroon, black furred with white, and scarlet. The robe which was worn at the coronation only was parti-colored maroon and mouse-color. That they were somewhat different in Chaucer's day can be seen in the fine pictures of the four Law Courts reproduced in *Archæologia*, vol. xxxix from a manuscript in the Inner Temple. On the Canterbury pilgrimage the sergeant was naturally not dressed in his full official robes, but when Chaucer says he rode "but homely in a medley coat," it is a mistake to suppose that he was clothed in a sedate garment of a pepper-and-salt mixture, as some commentators have suggested. The term "medley" here and "motley" in the description of the Merchant have been much misunderstood. The best evidence seems to indicate that by "medley" was meant then a cloth dyed in the wool and by "motley" a goods with an elaborate-figured pattern, either in the same color or

in another. Certainly these were the meanings attached to the terms by the artist who painted the figures of the Canterbury pilgrims in the Ellesmere manuscript.

It is obvious that the income a sergeant of the law could expect must have been very large to justify such splendor and such expenditure in connection with the ceremonies of creation, and we are not surprised that Chaucer informs us that the Sergeant received many fees and robes. We learn from John of Arderne that it was customary for a person wishing to obtain the services of an eminent surgeon not only to pay a retainer but also to promise the annual gift of a robe —that is, a whole suit of clothes, not merely a gown—of a certain value for life or for a specified term of years, and there can be little doubt that a similar practice prevailed with reference to men of law.

Not only was it required by law that the judges of both the king's courts, the court of common pleas and the court of the king's bench, should be chosen from the number of sergeants at law, but sergeants were often appointed by patent and commission to serve

in the itinerant courts for specified terms. This is the meaning of Chaucer's lines:

> Justice he was full often in assize
> By patent and by pleyn commission

The patent was the appointment to serve as judge. The commission was addressed to the body of justices so appointed and specified the range of their jurisdiction, that is, whether they were to hear all sorts of cases or only cases of specified sorts. The difference between the two may be seen by comparing No. 183 of the *Life Records*, which is a patent appointing Chaucer justice of the peace, and No. 188, which is a commission defining the powers of the justices appointed and authorizing their actions.

Since the sergeants at law were the most learned and the most experienced pleaders at the bar, any one of them would probably have been worthy of the encomium which Chaucer pronounces upon the legal knowledge of the Sergeant. The main body of English law was regarded as beginning with William the Conqueror, and every sergeant perhaps could

quote in exact legal phraseology every important case and judgment since that date. Perhaps only less experienced pleaders would need to aid their memories by the use of such written compilations as that known as *Bracton's Notebook* or by such a collection of the statutes as we have recently acquired at the University of Chicago—a fat little pocket volume of some three hundred pages measuring about three by four inches.

Most of Chaucer's lines about the Sergeant at Law, then, might very well apply to almost any one of the sergeants of his day, but several details are given which greatly reduce the list of those who may have served Chaucer as model for this figure. Some sergeants can be excluded from consideration because they had not, like Chaucer's Sergeant, served often as justice in assize; others because they were not especially noted as great "purchasours" of land. Others may safely be excluded because they achieved some distinction which we may assume would have been mentioned by Chaucer if his sergeant had possessed it; for example, that of king's sergeant, or justice of the king's bench, or

chief baron of the exchequer. In the list thus further reduced we may be able to find a man of the type described who is connected with a part of the country with which Chaucer had special connections and is also so associated with one of Chaucer's friends as to render it possible at least that he may have been the original of the portrait.

The legal records for the reign of Richard II are unfortunately incomplete, but we may be reasonably sure that they record the career of every sergeant who was as active in the practice of his profession as was the one whom Chaucer had in mind in drawing his portrait. It will be readily admitted that no consideration should be given to anyone who became sergeant after 1390, for the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* cannot on any supposition be much later than this date, and Chaucer's statement that the Sergeant had often been justice requires us to allow a sufficient time for that feature of his career. The lists of sergeants given by Dugdale, Wynne, Foss, and Pulling record only eleven otherwise eligible for our consideration who were appointed before 1390. Since Chaucer is ap-

parently giving a complete list of the claims to distinction possessed by his Man of Law, we may safely dismiss from consideration all sergeants who had been promoted to be judges of the king's courts or chief baron of the exchequer before 1387, the earliest date at which the *Prologue* is conceived to have been written. This would at once eliminate all of the eleven sergeants on the standard lists except five—Walter de Clopton, John de Middleton, Edmund de Clay, John Hill, and William Rickhill—but the standard lists are based solely upon the writs of appointment which have been preserved, and are incomplete. They must be supplemented by other evidence. A survey of the commissions of assize enables us to add the names of Thomas Pynchbek and William Thirnyng. This gives us a total of seven candidates whose claims require to be examined. Walter de Clopton may safely be dismissed, both because he was appointed king's sergeant in 1377—an honor which Chaucer would perhaps have recorded had it been possessed by his Man of Law—and also because he was a knight and came of a wealthy family, both

of which traits are lacking in Chaucer's Sergeant. John de Middleton and Edmund de Clay may safely be dismissed, as neither of them appears to have served often as justice in assize before 1387. John Hill, of Hill's Court, Exeter, may next be dismissed for the same reason, and because there is no evidence of his accumulating land. We may next dismiss William Thirnyng, although we have records of his serving as justice in assize as early as 1380. Apparently, however, he served mainly in the extreme northern counties, was not well known in court circles, and therefore would probably not have been chosen by Chaucer for special portraiture.

There remain for consideration only two candidates, William Rickhill and Thomas Pynchbek. One's first impulse might well be to fix upon William Rickhill, for he came from the county of Kent, was a member of the commission of the peace to which Chaucer was appointed in 1386, and headed a special commission *ad inquirendum* of which Chaucer was a member in 1387. He does not, however, appear after all to be a very good candidate. He was not appointed

sergeant until 1383; he became king's sergeant in 1384 and justice of the king's bench in 1389; and, although he was diligent in business and frequently appears in the list of justices of assize, he seems not to have been distinguished as a "purchasour" of land, and to have accumulated only a comparatively small estate. This leaves us only Thomas Pynchbek, and curiously enough the facts of his career, so far as they can be ascertained, answer exactly to those which Chaucer attributes to his Man of Law.

There had been a great and wealthy family which took its name from the little village of Pynchbek in Lincolnshire not far from the estates of the Swynfords. This family died out in the thirteenth century, apparently ceasing to exist in 1281. The name, however, was adopted a generation later by another family. According to *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, the original name of the new family was Sarsonne, which was abandoned by Thomas Pynchbek, the father of the Thomas who became sergeant of the law. This new family appears to have been possessed of ambition and ability, but not of any considerable

amount of wealth at the middle of the fourteenth century. In 1368 both the Thomases, father and son, are named in a commission of the peace, but the father's name disappears from the records, and after 1369 the name of the son appears frequently and appears alone. Although the writ of appointment of Thomas as sergeant of the law has disappeared, it is clear from other records that he had been admitted to this grade at least as early as 1376. Between this year and 1388 he served often as justice of assize. On April 24, 1388, he was appointed chief baron of the exchequer during the pleasure of the king. He was apparently an adherent of the Gloucester faction, for his promotion came soon after they had obtained power and he was removed from office in May 1389, immediately after Richard had flung off his uncle's control. In the index of the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* for 1391-96 he is designated justice of common pleas. If this is correct the appointment would appear to be not earlier than the latter part of 1391. He lived until well on in the nineties, but is mentioned as dead in 1397.

Apparently the new family of Pynchbek was a landless family when our Thomas began his career. He appears to have been ambitious of founding a great estate and to have devoted himself diligently to acquiring in fee simple as much property as he could. In the patent rolls and among the ancient deeds, there are numerous records of land transactions in which he was concerned. Occasionally he appears as granting lands to others, but in the majority of them he is recorded as acquiring property in fee simple. The inquisition upon his death has apparently not been preserved, but his descendants continued the policy which he began, and by the end of the fifteenth century the chief of the family, also named Thomas, was one of the wealthiest landowners in Lincolnshire. The tomb of the later Thomas, one of extraordinary richness and splendor, is still extant in the parish church of Pynchbek. It exhibits twenty-two heraldic shields, an indication that the family had been diligent in acquiring property by marriage as well as by other means. As this family of Pynchbek was in no way related to the knightly family, extinct

in the thirteenth century, it very probably owed its position to the landed property of Thomas Pynchbek, sergeant of the law, who began the accumulation.

It is perhaps not without significance that the surname Pynchbek became a proverbial term for thrift. It is recorded by both Elyot and Huloet as a term meaning "miserly," "close-fisted," "a dry fellow of whom nothing may be gotten." Huloet lived at Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, not far from the district in which the name originated, but I am informed by two of my friends that it was current in western New York forty years ago with the same meaning.

If we inquire what connections there were between Chaucer and Thomas Pynchbek, we may note several. In the first place, if Chaucer was a student of the Temple, he had probably known Pynchbek for many years, as they were apparently of about the same age. In the second place, the village of Pynchbek, from which the family derived its name and which became the chief center of its estates, was not far from the chief manor and country home of Katherine Swynford, Chaucer's sis-

ter-in-law. Inasmuch as there is reason to believe that Philippa Chaucer spent a considerable part of her time in the eighties in Lincolnshire with her sister Katherine, there is every reason to believe that Chaucer's attention might have been specially directed to the rapid increase of wealth of this neighboring family. In the third place, Pynchbek and Chaucer were apparently on opposite sides politically. Pynchbek, we have seen, was promoted during Gloucester's ascendancy in 1388 and promptly removed from office when Richard gained control. Chaucer, whether expelled from office in 1386 or not, at least received an important post soon after Richard declared his intention to be king in fact as well as in name. But there is a further and perhaps more decisive reason in a dramatic story reported by Dugdale, concerning the relations between Pynchbek and Chaucer's friend Sir William de Beauchamp.

According to this story, Sir William de Beauchamp assembled four of the most eminent lawyers of the time, threw to each of them a piece of gold as a fee, and demanded a legal opinion concerning his right to the

Pembroke estates. The incident must have occurred shortly after the death of the young earl of Pembroke in 1389. All of them were silent except Pynchbek, who replied that Sir William had no claim upon the Pembroke estates and could have none except through the right heir, Edward Hastings, and that as Hastings was a minor, any claim which he might grant would be invalid. This reply made Sir William very angry. If Dugdale's story is true, it suggests that Chaucer may have seen the clever, ambitious man of law through the angry eyes of his friend, Sir William de Beauchamp, and that there may have been personal grounds for the malicious insinuations of the portrait of the Sergeant. How much weight is to be given to Dugdale's story we may one day be able to determine. He gives as his authority for it a manuscript "*penes* Sir H. le Strange." Unless the manuscript has since disappeared from the muniment room of Hunstanton Hall, it should be possible to discover exactly its original form and implications.

However this may turn out, the fact that the malice of Chaucer's portrait of the Reeve

of Baldeswelle perhaps had its origin in Chaucer's relations with Sir William de Beauchamp increases the probability that the model for the Sergeant of the Law was Thomas Pynchbek.

Finally, I will leave you to decide whether Chaucer is punning on Pynchbek's name when he says:

Thereto he koude endite and make a thyng,
Ther koudë no wight pynche at his writyng.

The Franklin

If Chaucer's portraits are not artificial representations of typical figures but portraits drawn from living models, any difficulty which his contemporaries might have had in identifying with certainty the Sergeant of the Law would have been removed by the portrait of his companion, the Franklin, for this portrait contains such a combination of striking personal traits as must have identified him immediately and certainly. No doubt there were in England many country gentlemen whose philosophy of life was that

of Epicurus and who in consequence of fondness for good eating and drinking kept such free and open hospitality as to entitle each to be called the patron saint of hospitality, the St. Julian of his district. Many of them loved a sop in wine as a morning bracer and sternly rebuked the cook if the sauces were not poignant and sharp. In many a hall the table dormant stood ready covered all day long with such abundance of pasties of fish and flesh and such a seasonable variety of dainty food that a man might well say it snowed meat and drink in this house. But Chaucer does not stop with so generalized a conception of the country magnate. The high coloring resulting from the Franklin's sanguine temperament combined with the whiteness of his beard calls up a striking and unforgettable figure. The accuracy of the comparison used by Chaucer of the Franklin's beard is noteworthy. He does not say it is white as snow, but white as is a daisy. When one remembers that the English daisy is tipped with red, and thinks of the Franklin's beard against the background of his

ruddy complexion, the appropriateness of the comparison seems perfect.

Naturally, this description of the Franklin's personal appearance does not help us much at the present day in our attempt to identify him. Fortunately, Chaucer mentions other characteristics which have left some traces that still remain. The Franklin, he tells us, had often been knight of the shire. He had also been sheriff of his county and countour and had presided at the sessions of the county court. We are further told that he belonged to the class of persons called vavasours. A survey of the records of parliament shows that at the time when Chaucer was writing there were comparatively few members of parliament who fulfilled all these conditions. If we find one who does, it seems reasonable to suppose that he may have been in Chaucer's mind when he drew the portrait, and this possibility will be raised to a high degree of probability if we find that he was a neighbor of the man to whom the evidence has pointed as the original of the Sergeant of the Law, for Chaucer represents them as coming to the Tabard together.

There are eight members of parliament who seem to deserve our consideration. William Wade of Rutlandshire is recorded as having served in parliament nine times between the fifteenth and thirty-seventh years of Edward III. He seems to have been otherwise not an important person, for neither the public records, nor *Archæologia,* nor the Leicestershire and Rutland *Notes and Queries* gives any further information concerning him. It seems quite certain that he was neither sheriff of his county nor justice of the peace, as Chaucer's Franklin was. Simon de Leek of Nottingham served in parliament seven times from 35 Edward III to 5 Richard II and was justice of the peace in 1377 and 1378. Nothing more is known of him, and he seems never to have been a sheriff of his county. Robert de la Mare of Wiltshire was in parliament seven times from 37 to 50 Edward III and was royal commissioner in Wiltshire from 1374 to 1377. The records have nothing else about him. Thomas de Fulnetby of Lincolnshire was in parliament seven times from 41 to 43 Edward III, but his career was mainly that of

ambassador and envoy to the papal court. Such a career does not seem appropriate to the Franklin. Moreover, we have no evidence that Fulnetby was ever sheriff, countour, or a member of the commission of the peace.

Three men remain for consideration, all of whom apparently are possible candidates for the portrait: Nicholas Styuecle of Huntingdonshire, Peter Tilliol of Cumberland, and John Bussy of Lincolnshire. Styuecle served in parliament sixteen times from 20 Edward III to 9 Richard III. He was sheriff in 1359, king's escheator in Buckingham and Bedford in 1360 and 1370, and appears as royal commissioner in 1368, 1369, 1370, 1376, and 1377, and was attorney or representative for various persons in 1367, 1368, and 1369. It is perhaps a slight disqualification that in 1369 he visited the court of Rome as attorney for the prior of Swaveseye, for no such journey is attributed to the Franklin. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the records of his career do not indicate any special connection with Chaucer or with any of the persons who formed Chaucer's

group of friends or special acquaintances. Peter Tilliol had served in parliament in 1377, 1381, 1386, and 1392. He was on the commission of the peace in 1380, 1382, and 1383, and served on other royal commissions in 1387 and 1388. His service as sheriff did not come until 1388. To those who believe that the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* was not completed until 1392 or 1393, Peter Tilliol may seem a not impossible candidate for Chaucer's portrait, but it is to be noted that he came from the far north, and except for his service in parliament, his career seems to have been confined to the north and not to have brought him into special contact with the members of Chaucer's circle.

John Bussy's qualifications seem better worthy of consideration:

He was knight of the shire in 1383, 1388, and in every other parliament in Richard's reign.

He was several times sheriff; according to the *Close Rolls* in 1383, 1384, and 1385; the *Dictionary of National Biography* records him as sheriff also in 1379, and the *Lincoln-*

shire Pedigrees as sheriff in 1386 and 1391.

Year after year he sat on commissions of the peace and other county business, several times with Pynchbek and always with men with whom Pynchbek was associated when in Lincolnshire.

He lived in Kesteven in Lincolnshire, only a short distance from Pynchbek's home. His family had owned land in this district as early as 1245. The records show that his widow, in the seventh year of Henry IV, possessed eleven manors and land in eight other places. The ancestral manor of Hagham is not named among her possessions, and probably descended to his heir.

That the lands held by the Bussys were partible is suggested by the fact that we find, besides the main line at Hagham, a number of large landowners of the same family name within a short distance of one another in Lincolnshire. That they were of great importance in that region is also indicated by the fact that throughout the fourteenth century members of the family acted as collector of subsidies, escheater, sheriff, and knight of the shire.

It will be remembered that Bussy became speaker of the house of commons in 1394, and although at first he manifested great independence, soon became a partisan of King Richard and a leading member of the small group whose ill counsel the satirists of the time held responsible for Richard's misconduct and misfortune. All three members of the group, Bussy, Green, and Baggot, were captured, brought to trial for treason, and beheaded. In consequence of this, Bussy's estates were confiscated, and his heir was not restored in blood until the tenth year of Henry IV.

To this identification it may be objected that the social status of Chaucer's pilgrim is that of a franklin and a vavasour, and that even as early as 1384 Bussy is called "Sir John" and is designated in the records as "Chevalier." This is a point of some difficulty, but does not, I believe, present any insuperable objection to the identification. "Frankeleyn" and "vavasour" are designations which rarely occur in the records of the fourteenth century. Standard definitions of both terms are derived from Selden's *Titles*

of Honor, and it is well known that Selden based his study upon documents of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

It appears, however, that "frankeleyn" originally designated a degree or order immediately below that of baron, and seems specially to have been applied to a large landholder who was not a knight banneret. "Vavasour," as its form and etymology indicate, originally designated a tenant who holds his lands not immediately from the king, but mediately as a subordinate of some direct holder. Chaucer's use of the term "frankeleyn" seems to indicate that it was still in the vocabulary of common speech—compare Roy's use of the term in 1528:

> One or two ryche francklyngis
> Occupyinge a dozen mens lyuyngis—

but it seems entirely to have disappeared from the official usage of the later fourteenth century. Indeed, there is some slight indication that both "frankeleyn" and "vavasour" were specially connected with the North Midland, and particularly with the district of Lincolnshire. Mr. Alfred C. E. Welby, in

the twelfth volume of *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, records the occurrence of the term "frankeleyn" in the *Feudal Aids* for 1428 and 1431, and Mr. F. M. Stenton, in his study of *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw*, emphasizes the fact that the vills of the Danelaw were free to an extent perhaps without parallel elsewhere in England. The peculiar form of land tenure known as "frige soca" is certainly suggestive of "frankeleyn," and whether or not it existed throughout the Danelaw, it at least existed in Kesteven, the seat of the Bussys.

As I was unable to obtain much evidence for the use of "vavasour" as a technical term in fourteenth century England, a brief study was made of the occurrence of the word as a family name. This inquiry resulted in discovering that while the pedigrees of other counties published by the Harleian Society showed only half a dozen occurrences of the name, in the Lincolnshire pedigrees the Vavasours filled twenty lines of the index. This is not conclusive, but undoubtedly suggests that vavasour was a northern, and particularly a Lincolnshire, institution.

In examining the *Feudal Aids* for 1428 and 1431 Mr. Welby found military fees in the hands of persons of all classes of society, and he inferred that at that time "persons of any rank might inherit or purchase these fees, which originally had necessitated personal service for war, with the attendant possibility of knighthood." It is clear that the Knight of the Canterbury pilgrimage was a knight banneret, and it seems highly probable that in view of the commonness of other grades of knighthood, Chaucer was willing to disregard them and to present his Franklin simply as a franklin. The fact that Bussy was regarded by his enemies as an upstart points to his being classed as a commoner.

Chaucer's portrait of the Franklin and his treatment of him in the further development of the Canterbury pilgrimage are entirely complimentary and devoid of any satirical suggestion. He represents him as a country gentleman of great wealth, obviously living mainly on his own estate and keeping such hospitality as must have given him general popularity. If Sir John Bussy was the man, it would seem entirely possible that

Chaucer may have visited him in his Lincolnshire home. Ingoldby, one of Bussy's manors, was only about five miles from Kettlethorpe, the chief manor of the Swynfords. From Grantham, another manor belonging to Katherine Swynford (where in 1384 she complained of a robbery), it was only about the same distance to Hagham (Hougham) where presumably Bussy had his fishponds and his mews for partridges. It should be remembered that when Chaucer wrote, Bussy had not yet become speaker of the house or adviser to the king and so brought down upon himself the bitter charges we find in *Richard the Redeless* and other contemporary satires.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, IV

THE SHIPMAN AND THE MERCHANT

The Shipman

The interest of students of Chaucer has long been excited by the character and exploits of that picturesque buccaneer the Shipman, whose knowledge of seamanship and of all the bays and inlets of the coast was so absolute, whose beard had been shaken by so many a tempest, who pilfered the wine of his patrons as he transported it from the continent to England, and who light-heartedly set the victims of his sea-fights to walk home by water. Chaucer labels him as "woning fer by weste," and though his suggestion that he came from "Dertemouthe" is somewhat tentative, he has no doubt that his ship was named "The Maudeleyne." Modern students knowing that Dartmouth was very active in sea-faring in the fourteenth century, and assuming that "The Maudeleyne" was not only an appropriate but a common name

for ships, have usually supposed that the Shipman was only a type and that "Dertemouthe" and "The Maudeleyne" were intended only to give verisimilitude to the sketch. Mr. Karkeek's paper showing the actual existence of a Dartmouth ship named "The Maudeleyne," though well known, has been little regarded.

But no contemporary Englishman who read Chaucer's lines—certainly no member of court, official, or mercantile circles—could have doubted for a moment that Chaucer meant the Shipman to hail from Dartmouth and only from Dartmouth.

Dartmouth, notwithstanding the small number of its inhabitants, was one of the leading seaports of England, and its seamen appear to have been especially bold and ready to engage in dangerous enterprises. Moreover, just at the time when Chaucer was writing the Canterbury *Prologue* and *Tales*, the ship owners and masters of the town were peculiarly in the focus of public attention. It was charged that four vessels, a balenger and a barge of Dartmouth, a balenger of "Chirburgh," and a barge of Calais, but all ap-

parently under the leadership of John Hawley of Dartmouth and largely manned by Dartmouth seamen, had attacked and captured three vessels loaded with wine and "pessiones," notwithstanding their possession of safe-conducts from Sir John de Roches, captain of Brest at the time, and from Sir Thomas Percy, his immediate predecessor in that office. The events seem to have occurred in the ninth year of King Richard's reign, that is, 1385-86, and complaint was promptly brought against Hawley by Sir John de Roches. The case was heard by commissioners of the court of chivalry—the same court which tried the famous Scrope-Grosvenor controversy. As the proceedings in the court of chivalry lasted until 1394 and the report, highly abbreviated, fills nine rolls of 71 membranes in all, I will not attempt to summarize or evaluate the testimony. But the stories told by some of the witnesses are so picturesque and so well illustrate the customs and attitudes of fourteenth century shipmen that I cannot entirely refrain from quotation. Richard Scoce, a cousin of John Hawley's, thirty years of age, lettered and of free birth,

testified that he was in a balenger of Dartmouth of which Piers Resselden was master, along with Hawley's barge and a balenger from Cherbourg and a barge from Calais, and during Lent they were in La Trade "to make their profit against the enemies of our lord the king." They saw three crayers or small vessels loaded with wine only, hailed them, and finding that they were from Brittany, Morleux and St. Geldre, and without safe-conduct, attacked them. The Dartmouth balenger being swiftest came up first and the crayers bound themselves together and shot at them violently with two guns and quarrels and darts. After one of its men had been killed and two wounded, the balenger withdrew from the fight. The Cherbourg balenger similarly lost men and withdrew. Then came Hawley's barge and the Calais barge and the men in the crayers fled to land in their boats. The four vessels then seized the crayers and remained there in the bay of Odiorne [Audierne] that day and night and the following day. Then they sailed to La Trade before St. Mathieu and there divided their gains. It was customary for the owner

of the vessel to take half of a prize and the *soudeours*—that is, the hirelings—the other half. Hawley's half amounted to fifteen tonnels of wine. De Roches' witnesses give a very different version of the affair, charging Hawley's men with knowingly violating the safe conduct given by de Roches' lieutenant, and acting with treachery.

It is somewhat interesting to note parenthetically that one of the witnesses describes the scene of the fight as between "le forland" and Penmark (the scene of the *Franklin's Tale*), which was obviously well known to Chaucer's sea-going contemporaries and probably to all intelligent persons.

We need not stop to inquire into the truth of the charges brought against Hawley and his men on this occasion. Similar charges against him were common, and as he was the most prominent citizen and the largest shipowner of Dartmouth in his day, his career will repay our consideration of it. His celebrity is attested by the traditional verse:

Blow the wind high or blow the wind low,
It blows ships home to Hawley's How.

On June 26, 1378, he was appointed on a commission to inquire about ships dodging the king's service and on December 1 of the following year he, with Benedict Bottesana and Thomas Asshenden, was licensed to go to sea for a year at their own expense to destroy the King's enemies. One of their ships was the "Magdaleyne" or "Maudeleyne." On December 1, 1374, and February 13, 1377, he had headed commissions for the defense of Dartmouth. But the sea-fights of Hawley and his men were not all fought in the king's interest or under royal license and protection. And it is of interest to note that his operations were especially notorious in the years immediately preceding the composition of the *Canterbury Tales* and during that period. The *Patent Rolls* record John Hawley, who was then mayor of Dartmouth, as master of two barges of Dartmouth which with various others (Hugh Weston and John Hobbes are owners and masters respectively of two of them) were involved in a charge of robbing a Genoese tarit driven ashore on Brittany, January 28, 1386. Only two months later John Hawley and Thomas

Asshenden of Dartmouth, owners of the great barge called "La Trinite," and Perkyn Lauer, master, took four tuns of wine of Rochelle from a Middelburg ship and on November 2 of that year were condemned to pay 40*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for so doing. Whether Hawley was among the Dartmouth men who on February 24, 1387, attacked a Spanish ship at sea is uncertain. His associate Hugh Weston, master of the barge, "La Margarete" of Dartmouth, is recorded as having captured the ship and taken 140 prisoners, besides the slain. Certainly Hawley himself took part in raids on foreign ships. On October 28, 1387, he is named with Hugh Weston, Peter Lauer, and fifteen other men of Dartmouth and Kingswear (across the river) as having taken 21 tuns of wine from a Dutch ship. They had to pay a large sum for the wine, with damages and costs. Hawley was responsible for the whole amount; his shipmaster Lauer paying 7*l.* 10*s.* for two tuns and one pipe; Weston the same for one tun, one pipe; all the others half as much or less. On May 8, 1389, a writ summoned Hawley, under the enormous penalty of 1,000*l.*, to appear be-

fore the king and council at Trinity Term. On June 25 another writ ordered the sheriffs to make proclamation that Dutch merchants who had complaints of ships or goods captured at sea should come and receive justice; and the proclamation was repeated on June 30. As no one appeared to make complaint against Hawley, who came in person, he was quit. Later in the same year he was not so fortunate. Merchants of Rochelle, France, and of Flanders brought complaint against John Hawley of Dartmouth before the king and council, at a hearing on November 26. It is perhaps not without interest to note that Chaucer's friend, Lewis Clifford, was at this time a member of the council and was present at the hearing.

With the incidents just recited in mind, the reader will hardly find it strange that Chaucer—if he wished to single out any port and shipowner—should select Dartmouth and John Hawley; and Hawley himself could hardly have felt that the selection, even if a trifle too personal, was without a basis of verisimilitude.

Of course it is not to be inferred that Haw-

ley's career was exceptional or that he was always the offender. For example, on July 1, 1389, he and Thomas Asshenden brought complaint against certain Bretons for seizing the freight of two ships, "La Marie" and "La Trinite" of Dartmouth, to the value of 300*l.* They charged that the Bretons had seized the goods and beaten the men and put them to ransom—which was at least more humane treatment than the Shipman was accustomed to grant. Furthermore, Hawley's exploits seem not to have jeopardized his standing as a citizen or his favor with the king. Besides the commissions mentioned above, he was appointed on December 6, 1386, on a commission to catch Plymouth men accused of stealing from a Middleburgh ship. On July 18, 1388, he is named as collector of customs "at Melcombe and west through Devonshire and Cornwall to Bridgewater." On September 2, 1388, he was granted a subsidy for 500 *l.* cash and on November 15 following he was exempted from assizes, etc. And although on February 18, 1391, he was accused of concealing and appropriating divers of the King's

profits and emoluments in the customs, and justices Rickhill and Brenchesley were commissioned to investigate the charges, he was, on August 11, king's escheator for Devon and Cornwall. The record of his attacks on foreign vessels continues as late as 1404, but on June 14, 1401, he is called "late lieutenant of Thomas Percy, late admiral of England, and a little later he, or his son John, is commissioned to take mariners and with John Andrewe of Dartmouth to make a voyage for the king. He died December 30, 1408.

It is not to be supposed that John Hawley, for all that we find recorded against him, was the original of Chaucer's Shipman. Hawley was too wealthy, distinguished, and perhaps too courtly a person to figure as the rough sailor depicted in the *Prologue.* He was justice of the peace in Devon 1381-82, mayor of Dartmouth, 1385-86, collector of customs for Devonshire and Cornwall, and escheator for the same counties; his wealth is indicated not only by his ownership of a number of barges, but also by land transactions and large sums of money borrowed and lent —e.g., on June 13, 1388, John Walshe, Kt,

owed him 106*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* and on November 15, 1391, he borrowed 40*l.* from Gilbert Maufeld, the Billingsgate merchant who lent money so freely to Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, esq., Henry Scogan, and the rest; his social standing is perhaps best attested by the fact that he married as his second wife the daughter and heiress of Chief Justice Tresilian. The fine tomb of John Hawley and his two wives is still to be seen in the chancel of St. Saviour's church at Dartmouth, and the ruins of his great hall near Dartmouth are mentioned by the antiquary Leland. John Prince, the historian of Devonshire, devotes several folio pages to a celebration of Hawley's fame.

But if Hawley was not the original of the Shipman, is there any other person who can with any probability be considered for this doubtful honor? Surely Chaucer's lines point rather to the master, or captain, than to the owner of the vessel. The name of the master of the "Maudeleyne" has been accessible to Chaucer students for many years. Little attention has been paid to it, because of the general attitude of scholars concerning Chaucer's

methods of portraiture—that is, the view that he drew, not real persons, but mere artificial types. As we have found some reasons for abandoning this view, it seems worth while to recall the records. In 1884 Mr. P. Q. Karkeek published among the *Essays* of the Chaucer Society a very valuable study of the Shipman and his barge. In it he quoted from the exchequer accounts of the customs for Devonshire payments of dues by two masters of the "Maudeleyne." On June 13, 21, and 27, 1379, the master was George Cowntree; on September 21, 1391, Peter Risshenden—undoubtedly the same man as the Piers Resselden who in the Lenten season of 1386 commanded the balenger of Dartmouth that joined Hawley's barge in the capture of the three crayers in the bay of Odiorne. That the "Maudeleyne" of the records quoted by Karkeek was the vessel mentioned by Chaucer is certain, for the records call it the "Magdeleine of Dertemouthe." That the master when Chaucer wrote was either George Cowntree or Peter Risshenden, though not certain, is at least probable. We cannot at present decide this

question, but it would have afforded no difficulty to those of Chaucer's contemporaries who either knew the "Maudeleyne," or were familiar with Dartmouth, for Dartmouth, despite its fame, was a small town. According to the subsidy roll of 1377 it contained, exclusive of the clergy and mendicants, only 506 persons above the age of fourteen.

But whether the circle for which Chaucer wrote knew the master of the "Maudeleyne" or not matters little. They at least knew well its probable owner, John Hawley; they knew that Dartmouth and John Hawley were almost synonymous terms and that both were especially notorious for just such feats as Chaucer ascribes to his Shipman; and they can hardly have failed to enjoy greatly this unmistakable picture of one of Hawley's men. Perhaps Hawley himself would have joined in the laugh.

The Merchant

If the Merchant stood higher than the Shipman in the estimation of Chaucer's public, this was perhaps due less to any superior-

ity in "moral virtue" than to his better social status. Like so many—in fact, all—of the occupational designations in the *Prologue*, "merchant" was in the fourteenth century very specific in its meaning and was not applicable, as it is today, to any shopkeeper, great or small. Merchants were men engaged in the wholesale trade as importers or exporters or both. Their main traffic was in wool, woolfells, hides, cloth, tin, and iron. Their history goes back into remotest antiquity, and the earliest records of them indicate that their activities long antedate the records.

Two organizations of them, the Merchants of the Staple and the Merchant Adventurers, which later became powerful rivals, dispute precedence in antiquity and both rest their claims on the same records. It is clear enough that in the thirteenth century certain privileges were granted by John duke of Brabant to English merchants trading to the Netherlands, but it is not clear that either of the two organizations can lay claim to that grant as belonging exclusively to its members. It seems rather that originally there was no distinction

between the two groups of merchants and no separate organization of either group. Even after the establishment of the separate organizations, it was not uncommon for the same merchant to have membership in both companies.

The history and functions of the Merchants of the Staple have been so often and fully discussed by students of Chaucer that very little need be said of them here. Most valuable and interesting are the excellent paper by Professor John W. Hales—now a Chaucer classic—in which he attempted to date the composition of the *Prologue* on the basis of the reference to Middelburgh in l. 277 and the record of the successive locations of the Staple, and the recent paper by Professor Thomas A. Knott, in which he attempts—successfully, I think—to show that the argument made by Professor Hales is not conclusive. Both papers are rich in information for the student. Here it may suffice to say that from the middle of the fourteenth century the Merchants of the Staple were a definite organization, chartered by the king of England and author-

ized to elect their own governors and execute their own laws. From time to time specific towns and cities in England or on the continent were designated by law as the only markets through which the business of the Merchants of the Staple could be transacted. This business was primarily the export of wool, woolfells and skins. The only time during the probable period of composition of the *Canterbury Tales* when the Staple was at Middelburgh, was, as Professor Hales pointed out, the years 1384 to 1388. But as Professor Knott clearly shows, special privileges of trading to other towns than the established Staple were so commonly granted that the reference to Middelburgh does not mark it with absolute certainty as the legal Staple at the time the line was written.

The Staplers, however, exporters of wool, were not the only traders known as merchants, and it is worthy of note that in Chaucer's account of the activities of his Merchant not a word is said of any dealings in wool. Perhaps he was not a Merchant of the Staple, but a member of the rival organization of Merchant Adventurers.

Lucas, in his standard history, *The Beginnings of English Overseas Enterprise,* says: "The Merchant Adventurers became the English merchants domiciled or sojourning across the seas, in foreign parts, though near home; they were concerned with importing into the cities and lands wherein they implanted themselves, not wool grown in England, but cloth made in England from English wool." He adds that they dated officially only from the reign of Henry IV, referring to the royal license, dated by Rymer as of February 5, 1406-7, granting to the English merchants in Holland, Zeeland, Brabant, and Flanders, the right to elect governors and make laws and regulations for themselves. But there seems to be no good reason to distinguish these merchants from those residing at Bruges in 1359 or to deny to the latter organization, if not corporate recognition; for on February 26 in that year Louis de Male, count of Flanders, issued a charter "granting for the future to all merchants of the kingdom of the seignory of the king of England, holding their congregation of them and their merchandises under the governance of their gov-

ernor in our said city of Bruges, the points, graces, and franchises following." For our present purpose the most important privileges in the long enumeration which follows are the rights "to come, go, and inhabit freely, and to buy and sell all kinds of merchandise from whatever source."

If we may believe the ancient traditions of the Merchant Adventurers their existence as an organization long antedates this charter. The account their secretary, John Wheeler, writing in 1601, gave of their origin, is that they were first called the Brotherhood of St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury and in 1248 obtained privileges from John duke of Brabant which were afterward confirmed to them by Edward III of England; that "Lewis earl of Flanders granting them privileges in 1358 [i.e. 1359], they settled themselves in the town of Bridges [Bruges], afterwards at Midleburgh; afterwards in 1444 at Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom." "This sainted antiquity," says Lucas, "was cast in their teeth in later years by outsiders, who resented their monopoly and their exactions. This is shown by the preamble to the act of

1496, with its references to the fines 'demanded by colour of a fraternity of St. Thomas of Canterbury' and to 'feigned holiness.'" Of the connection of the Merchant Adventurers with St. Thomas of Canterbury there can be no doubt, though clear evidence as to when this connection began is as yet wanting. But Lucas notes that "In the charter given by Edward IV in 1462 to the English merchants in the Netherlands [the Merchant Adventurers] to elect a governor . . . one fourth of the fines was to be applied to the 'repairing and maintenance of two chapels founded to the honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury by our said subjects in the town of Bruges in Flanders and of Middelburgh in Zeland.'" Lucas later suggests a close connection between the Merchant Adventurers and the Mercers; and there can be little doubt of this, for as he points out, the minutes of the two companies were, down to 1526, kept in the same book, and the Mercers had special connection with the Becket tradition. Stow speaks of "the Mercer's chapel, sometime a hospital entitled of St. Thomas of

Acon or Acars," founded by the sister of Thomas Becket and her husband.

It must be noted that early writers on the subject sometimes claimed the connection with St. Thomas as belonging to the Merchants of the Staple. Lucas quotes Anderson as follows: "Some authors date the rise of the first commercial society of English merchants styled of St. Thomas Becket, from this year [1248], when they are said to have had privileges from John duke of Brabant. From which society did the company spring styled the Merchants of the Staple of England." But I have already pointed out that, before the legislation of 1353 regulating the wool trade and establishing certain towns as Staple towns, there was perhaps no clear distinction between Staplers and Merchant Adventurers, and that even later the organizations were not exclusive in membership. John Wheeler says of the Merchant Adventurers: "The Company consisteth of a great number (not fewer than 3500) of wealthie and well experimented Merchaunts dwelling in diverse great Cities, Maritime Townes . . ." The

recent authorities Cawston and Keane point out that the charter of 1406 conferred no exclusive rights "beyond that of choosing their own governor and rectifying their own abuses. By paying a 'freedom fine' of an old noble any person might consort with them . . . they would thus appear to have been at first an open trading association."

None of the authorities, early or late, has succeeded in determining exactly when the company of Merchant Adventurers licensed by Louis de Male on February 26, 1359 to dwell and trade in Bruges left Bruges for Middelburgh, though all agree that the transfer was made. No English writer, so far as I know, has cited the document of May 15, 1382, preserved in the archives of Bruges, in which, according to Gilliodts-van Severen, the editor, "Louis de Male déclare ne plus prendre sous sa protection et sauvegarde, attendu les troubles qui regnent en Flandre, les marchands étrangers qui font le commerce dans ce pays." This action produced protests. On June 10 the German merchants residing at Bruges wrote to the

council of the Hanse at Lübeck, requesting that they write to the principal towns, Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, urging protection of traders. This was done in a circular letter dated June 24. But Louis and the towns were equally powerless, and on August 10 Louis wrote to the magistrate of Antwerp rebuking him for writing about the losses of aliens. This would seem in all probability to have been the time at which the English merchants removed from Bruges to Middelburgh. In any event they cannot have remained at Bruges after the death of Louis de Male, on January 30, 1384. Louis had been friendly to England; his successor Philippe le Hardi was actively hostile. This change was marked in England by the appointment on November 18 of John Bourchier as governor (rewaert) of Flanders. The council refused to recognize the claims of Philippe, and the patent appointing Bourchier declared that the country "is devoid of all regular government." The quarrel was of course a purely political one involving the claims of England and France to sover-

eignty. Varenbergh, the historian of the diplomatic relations of Flanders and England in the Middle Ages, summarizes the situation in the years immediately following in these words: "Mais si les anciennes sympathies tentaient encore de se faire jour dans l'esprit des bonnes gens de Flandre, le duc n'en persistait pas moins dans ses rancunes; le 15 janvier 1387 (n. st.) il publia un mandement daté de Paris, dans lequel tout en accordant le libre commerce et l'entrée des ports de Flandre aux marchands de toutes les nations, il défend expressément d'y laisser pénétrer les Anglais ou de leur acheter n'importe quelle marchandise." The two clauses excepting the English are specific and of wide scope: "exeptez les Engles, leurs subgiez et ceulx qui tiennent leur partie" and "parainsi que lesdiz marchans et maistres de neifs n'amainent avecques eulx ne en leurs vassaulx marchandises ou denrées qui soient aux Engles." The next year, after the failure of the expedition against England, efforts were made toward a commercial treaty between Flanders and England, but conditions

long remained disturbed and uncertain. There can be no doubt then that at the time Chaucer was writing the *Prologue*, the Merchant Adventurers of England had removed from Bruges and settled in Middelburgh. No one questions that when they left Bruges they went directly and immediately to Middelburgh. That was the logical and almost inevitable move. All they had to do was to travel a few miles and cross the river Scheldt to find themselves in their new home. That they would have been welcomed admits of no doubt. John Wheeler says of their later move from Middelburgh to Antwerp (1444) that "they were met by the magistrates and citizens without the town and conducted with solemnity [i.e., with pomp and ceremony] to an entertainment." He adds that they were the founders of the greatness of that city, which soon after their arrival became a flourishing seaport, so that "houses therein which used to be let for 40 or 60 dollars were now let for 300 or 400 and some for 800 dollars yearly rent."

That Chaucer's Merchant resided abroad is suggested by his "Flaundryssh bevere hat."

His foreign residence gave him special facilities for getting hold of the foreign money, "sheeldes" (*ecus*), which he sold in exchange apparently at illegal rates of profit. Professor Knott has discussed pretty fully the attempts of the king of England to regulate exchange. Statutes were passed fixing the rates of exchange and definitely prohibiting money exchanges from being held by any persons other than the king's money-changers or their deputies. Writs to enforce the statutes were directed to the sheriffs and the importance of the matter is attested by numerous entries in the London *Letter Books*.

The "chevisaunces" of the Merchant open a wide field of inquiry. Lines 279–80:

> This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,
> Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,

rather suggest that he was borrowing largely to carry on his own business. This may be true, but it is not inconsistent with the supposition that, like many other great merchants, he did a large business in lending sums of money, large and small, at usurious rates, for *chevisaunce* had come to connote

usury. *The Libell of English Policy* definitely speaks of "such a chevisaunce that men call usure" and *Letter Book H* (p. 157) shows that the general conception in Chaucer's own time of chevisaunce was an usurious contract. Of course no rate of interest was specified. The borrower was merely obliged to pay at a specified date a definite sum larger than the one he borrowed. As the amount lent is usually not stated in the records it is difficult to estimate the usual rate, but a shrewd guess can be made from the transactions of Gilbert Maufeld (or Maghfeld), whose name appears in the *Chaucer Life Records* (No. 230) as that of one of the collectors of the subsidy in 1391. Maufeld was a great merchant, comparable in wealth and in the scope of his transactions with such men as Philipot, Brembre, and the later Whittington. His daybook for 1390-95, recently discovered in the Record Office by Dr. Hubert Hall, shows him to have been also a money lender. His clients are men of all stations in life from petty tradesmen and servants to prelates, nobles and perhaps the king himself, including Geoffrey Chau-

cer, John Gower, esquire, Henry Scogan, and a dozen others known to students of Chaucer. This interesting volume will be edited and published ere long, and we can now stop only to use the Chaucer record in illustration of chevisaunces. On Sunday, July 28, 1392, only fifteen days after he had received twenty marks in payment of salary long due him as clerk of the king's works, Geoffrey Chaucer borrowed from Maufeld an unnamed sum for which he was to repay 26*s.* 8*d.* on the following Saturday. If, as seems probable, the sum lent was only 25*s.*, Maufeld's chevisaunces must have been very profitable or the business one of great risks. As a matter of fact, much of the business of Merchants engaged in foreign trade was very speculative and Maufeld, despite his one-time prosperity, died in debt to the king—which accounts for his daybook's being now in the Record Office.

The Merchant's anxiety that the sea "betwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle" should be kept free of foreign enemies and freebooters reflects the common anxiety of English merchants for centuries. The keeping of the sea

between England and Flanders was the principal subject of the first great English treatise on commerce, *The Libell of English Policy*, which refers with approval to Edward III's solicitude a century earlier in this respect. Yet Edward's efforts were not always successful. A petition of the Commons in 21 Edward III recites that "whereas all that would pass with wools to the Staple should pay 12*d.* upon every sack for safe conduct; and certain merchants undertook for the same . . . and yet have not, nor will not perform that contract, . . . whereby many merchants have lost their lives, wools, etc., that they . . . be made to come into this present parliament to make their gree to the merchants." Various groups of persons at different times undertook to keep the seas in consideration of receiving a share in the customs. The undertaking of Philipot and his associates is well known. More picturesque and interesting was that of Gilbert Maufeld and Robert Parys, merchants, and John Haukin and Thomas Horseman, mariners, who by an indenture dated May 6, 1383, undertook the defense of the sea between Winchelsea and

Berwick-on-Tweed from May 24 until a year from the coming Michaelmas, receiving therefor 2500 marks plus 6*d.* in the pound and 2*s.* a tun from the customs (except money received by the constable of Dover). On December 2 they were removed from office by the king's council. The Council Registers—badly preserved from this whole period—contain, I think, no explanation of the removal, but there is among the Close Rolls a document dated February 6, 1384, which if it does not explain the removal at least suggests that merchants might not always be safe even from their legal protectors. This is an order to the collectors of customs at London, if assured by three merchants of Plesancia [Italian names] that they will take to Middelburgh and nowhere else certain valuable goods loaded at Lisbon in a Genoese ship, to let the merchants put them in any ship and without payment of customs to take them there, as their petition shows that on a voyage direct to Middelburgh along the coast of England their ship was taken at sea by Gilbert Maufeld, Robert Parys and other their fellows, servants or deputies, averring that

they were enemies. Maufeld and his fellows were ordered to make restitution. The frequent state of warfare between France and England throughout the whole stretch of the Hundred Years' War gave opportunities for privateering which were enthusiastically embraced by shipmen of both countries.

I once thought that the reference to Orwell as the English port sought by the Merchant's ships pointed to Ipswich, an active centre of foreign trade at the time, as the home base of operations of the Merchant. This was Professor Knott's view and he gave much interesting information about the trade of Ipswich to support it. I thought this might be still further confirmed by the fact that Chaucer's ancestors came from there and some of his near relatives still lived there. But we have no evidence that Chaucer retained any interest in the home of his ancestors, though of course he may have done so. More important is the fact that the Merchant seems to have lived and traded in Middelburgh. If so, in consequence of the danger from freebooters in the channel, he would probably have been concerned to send his ships to the

nearest English port. This would undoubtedly have been Orwell. But it is possible that after all the English port through which he traded was Ipswich, which lies at the head of the salt-water estuary, at the mouth of which is the harbour of Orwell. Orwell may have been mentioned only because it lies at the end of the sea-journey; when a ship had reached the mouth of the river it was safe from pirates. But Orwell was itself a flourishing port. When King Edward went to Flanders in 1338 his ships gathered there and he sailed from that port. In any event, the anxiety of the Merchant that the shortest route between England and the Netherlands should be kept free of pirates at any expense, however great, is suggestive of the disturbed conditions at the time Chaucer wrote; and the time of greatest disturbance was apparently the year 1387, when the king of France and the earl of Flanders were planning and attempting an invasion of England, and the years immediately following.

In view of Chaucer's well-known habit of hinting in a word more than can be said in a sentence, it seems legitimate also to recall

that in 1387 official inquiry was made concerning smuggling from the eastern ports into Middelburg. But this may be an unjust suspicion; the Merchant was interested in the legal protection of trade.

As to the Merchant's name, I agree with Professor Knott that Chaucer's profession of ignorance was due to policy. He could hardly have given him a name that could not have been fitted to some merchant of much the same character and career as the one he portrayed, and it seems not to have been his habit to assign a name to any character of the upper or middle classes that he treated satirically.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, V

THE PRIORESS AND THE WIFE OF BATH, THE SECOND NUN AND THE NUNS' PRIEST

Despite the democracy of Chaucer in bringing together in a single group pilgrims from all ranks and classes of fourteenth century society, no mere modern, I fancy, would dare to represent the lady Prioress as associating on familiar terms with the Wife of Bath. But a writer of the generation following Chaucer did not hesitate to do this. The author of *The Tale of Beryn* writes:

> The Wyff of Bath was so wery, she had no will to walk;
> She toke the Prioress by the hond: "Madam, wol ye stalk
> Pryvely into the garden, to se the herbis growe,
> And aftir with our hostis wyff in hir parlour rowe?

I woll gyve yewe the wyne, and yee shull me also,
For tyll wee go to soper wee have naught ellis to do."
The Priores, as womman taught, of gentil blood, and hend,
Assented to hir counsell, and forth gon they wend,
Passyng forth sofftly into the herbery.

With this precedent I shall perhaps be pardoned for discussing together the only two women among the Canterbury pilgrims who are sufficiently individualized to demand our special attention.

The Prioress

Let us, as by all the laws of courtesy we should, discuss first the Prioress. Certainly hers is one of the most carefully drawn portraits in the gallery of pilgrims. She is distinctly not a mere generalized type but an individual. We are not only told her rank and, by implication, given the name of her convent, but are informed as to her name, her repugnance for oaths, her manner of singing, her fondness for pets, and other traits of

sentiment or character—notably her assiduity in cultivating the manners and habits of great ladies, sometimes not quite successfully, as in her efforts to speak the French language.

That Chaucer intended to represent the Prioress as belonging to the Benedictine nunnery of St. Leonard's, Bromley, in Middlesex, admits of no doubt. This Bromley is, of course, not to be confused with Bromley in Kent, as has been done by one editor. It is also quite certain that Chaucer is here not thinking of the rich abbey of Barking, four miles east of Stratford. Lysons is justified in saying that "all ancient references to a convent at Stratford-Bow apply either to the convent of monks at Stratford in Essex or that of nuns at St. Leonard, Bromley." Bromley lies in the hundred of Ossulston, about two miles east of Whitechapel church and adjoining Stratford-Bow. "The parish is of small extent," says Lysons, "and the parish church, dedicated to Saint Mary was, no doubt, the chapel of the nunnery which had that saint as its patroness. The nunnery was founded in the reign of William the Conqueror by William bishop of London for a

prioress and nine nuns." Lysons, following Tanner, gives a considerable list of grants to the convent, but it was never rich, like its neighbor the abbey of Barking, and its occupants were in general, though not always, persons decidedly lower in the social scale than the members of Barking, who seem to have come almost exclusively from the nobility and gentry. There are several records in the *Letter Books* of the city of London and other fourteenth century documents concerning the placing of the daughters of London tradesmen in the convent of St. Leonard's. This of course does not imply a total absence at this nunnery of the atmosphere and influences which make for gentle breeding, and it is quite certain that ambitious citizens would seek to obtain such advantages for their daughters. Some evidence of the social status of St. Leonard's will appear later.

In the first place, we may note that it is mentioned in the very earliest record we have concerning Geoffrey Chaucer. While he was in the household of the Countess Elizabeth of Ulster, wife of Prince Lionel, and apparently was accompanying her in her progresses

through the country, she visited the convent of St. Leonard's. The name of Stratford appears on the very first page of the fragmentary record of gifts that has been preserved to us. On September 2, 1356, the countess and her husband the prince visited the convent; apparently with their train of followers, for we find payments for the transport of the countess's bed and for a gift to her cook. The record naturally does not inform us of the countess's reason for this visit, but it seems possible to guess what it was.

In the year 1375 there died at the convent of St. Leonard's Elizabeth of Hainaut, sister of Queen Philippa of England and therefore the aunt of Prince Lionel. Her will, which was registered in the commissary court of the bishop of London, was probated on September 25, 1375. It was printed nearly a century ago in the volume entitled *Excerpta Historica,* published anonymously, but well known to have been edited by Samuel Bentley. Bentley says of Elizabeth that she "must have been a daughter of William count of Hainaut by Joan, daughter of Charles count of Valois, but Anderson in his laborious

work takes no notice of her; nor is she mentioned in the *Foedera, Rolls of Parliament, Calendar of Patent Rolls,* etc. *L'Art de Verifier les Dates* says there was a daughter Elizabeth who married Robert de Namur, but there is no other information to this effect. He was living in July, 1376." I have not attempted to verify, or add to, the information given by Bentley. For our purpose it is enough that Elizabeth was sister to Queen Philippa. If, as seems likely, she had been a member of the convent at Stratford for many years, it is highly probable that it was to visit her that the Countess Elizabeth of Ulster and her husband Prince Lionel went to Stratford in September 1356.

The will just mentioned not only establishes the relationship of Elizabeth of Hainaut to Queen Philippa, but in various ways throws light upon questions concerning Chaucer's Prioress. A translation of it into English can therefore hardly fail to be of interest to our investigation:

> In the name of God Amen. I, Elizabeth, sister of the lady Queen Philippa,

being sound of mind and memory, make my will on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Matthew, apostle and evangelist, in the year of our Lord 1375. First, I bequeath my soul to God Omnipotent and to the blessed Mary and all the saints and my body to be buried in the chapel of Mary the Blessed Virgin within the monastic cloister of St. Leonard's at Stratforde-atte-Bowe. Also I bequeath to the Chapel of the Blessed Mary my best mantle and best over-tunic of the color of the mantle and best veil and the fillet with pearls. Also I bequeath to the altar of the convent my second-best mantle furred with grys and over-tunic of the same color and second-best veil. Also I bequeath a cup called cockle for the expenses of my burial. Also I bequeath to Sara my maid a green gown and a green tunic and a self-edged triffle and two hair-nets. Also I bequeath to Madame Argentyn (*dne Argentyn*), nun, a pair of 'lyntharbs.' Likewise I bequeath to Master Geoffrey (*dno Galfr*), chaplain of the parish, three and a half yards of blanket. Also I bequeath to Andrew Tendale an ounce of gold. Also to Johanna Brerele a gown of tawny and a tunic of the same color. Also I bequeath to Robert Aylmer

three curtains, with a veil and two rugs and a blue gown and two bird cages (*?duas cell*). Also I bequeath to Roland Alis a pair of bedes of gold and a gold brooch; likewise to Madame Idoine (*dne Ydoine*), nun, a pair of gold tablets. Also I bequeath to Madame Mary (*dne Marie*), prioress, a gold ring with two stones, a ruby and an emerald; also to Master Thomas (*dne Thome*) of Woodstock a gold ring with four pearls and an emerald in the midst. Likewise I bequeath to Margaret Marshall a gold enamelled ring with cornelians. Also I bequeath to Johanna wife of John Taylor a blue tunic. Also I bequeath to Sara my maid a green casket with all the articles in it. Also I bequeath to Madame Argentyn a psalter. Also I bequeath to Sara my maid a red primer. The residue of all my goods not bequeathed I desire to be used by the monastic house in prayers for my soul, namely half to the house and half to the convent in equal parts. As my executors of this will for the faithful administration of all my goods bequeathed I appoint and ordain Master Geoffrey de Neunton, chaplain of the parish, and Andrew Tendale, and Sara of Oxford under the supervision of the Lady Prioress (*dne priorisse*).

This will deserves attention for several reasons. It indicates very clearly why Stratford-atte-Bowe had a high reputation as a fitting school for the daughters of London citizens. The presence of the sister of the Queen [1] there for many years would have given it a vogue which might well have lasted even beyond the time at which Chaucer was writing the *Canterbury Tales*. It is clear also that although the Lady Elizabeth had for years been an inmate of a religious house, she had not lost her interest in jewels, clothes, and other matters such as interested Chaucer's Prioress.

Several of the names mentioned in the will deserve at least a word in passing. The bequest of a ring to Margaret Marshall, countess and later duchess of Norfolk, granddaughter of Edward I and mother of Anne, countess of Pembroke, indicates some degree of intimacy between Elizabeth and the great lady. The only member of the immediate

[1] While reading page proofs I find a record of Elizabeth which has strangely escaped notice, although printed in the *Life Records* (No. 58). "Dame Elizabeth 'Holand,' soere nostre dite compaigne," is certainly, I think, Elizabeth de Hainaut.

royal family who receives a bequest is Thomas of Woodstock, youngest son of Edward III and Queen Philippa and therefore nephew of Lady Elizabeth. Why her other royal nephews are not mentioned it is of course impossible to say. Prince Lionel, who visited her in 1356, had been dead seven years, but the Black Prince, John of Gaunt, and Edmund de Langley, earl of Cambridge, were still living, as also were two of the daughters of the king and queen. The other legatees are not known to fame, though at least two of them have a possible interest for students of Chaucer. Geoffrey de Neunton, priest of the parish and therefore confessor to the convent, was probably the predecessor of Chaucer's Nuns' Priest, who will be discussed later on.

Most striking of all the names, perhaps, is that of one of the sisters twice remembered in the will. This name appears in the Latin of the will as *Domine Argentyn, moniali.* No doubt the attention of every student of Chaucer has already been attracted by its similarity to the Madame Eglentyne of the *Prologue* and by the fact that, like the Prioress of the

Prologue, this lady was entitled to be clept "Madame." I will not insist upon the ease with which Chaucer might have changed Argentyn to Eglentyne or mistaken the one for the other—somewhat similar mistakes, even the spelling "Eglinton," occur in the records of the Argentyn family—nor am I at all certain that the ladies are identical, but the possibility is surely interesting enough to deserve consideration.

Who was the Madame Mary, prioress of St. Leonard's in 1375, when this will was written I do not know, nor have I been able to discover whether Madame Argentyn succeeded her, though her rank and her prominence in the will suggest that she may have done so. In tracing the Argentyn, or Argentine, family I have been more successful, but I am not yet prepared to tell you exactly which member of it, if any, was the nun at Stratford.

The Argentines are said to have come over with the Conqueror, and certainly were a wealthy and distinguished family from the time of Henry III to that of Henry VI, when the main line ceased for lack of a male heir.

The principal seat of the family was in Hertfordshire, but they held lands also in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk. Reginald Argentine, or D'Argentine, died 1 Edward II, leaving a son and heir John, who did his homage, received livery of his lands, and, by Joan, his first wife, sole heir of Sir Roger Brian and his wife, had issue three daughters, Joan, Elizabeth, and Dionisia, who were heirs to their mother, and by Anne, his second wife, one son named John, who at the death of his father in 12 Edward II was six months old. Joan and Elizabeth married, and Elizabeth upon the deaths of her brother and sisters was left sole heiress. What became of the youngest daughter, Dionisia, I have been unable to learn. It seems probable that, whether as a nun or not, she died unmarried. Another Argentine, prominent in the time of Richard II and still more so in that of Henry IV, was Sir William Argentine of Suffolk. But as yet I have been unable to get much information about other members of his immediate family.

Concerning the portrait of the Prioress in

St. Loy in His Workshop
(From the painting by Petrus Cristus)

general I shall say nothing. It is not difficult to accumulate an abundance of new material illustrating its realistic accuracy and vivid truth, but the current interpretation of the picture is essentially correct and needs retouching in only a few minor particulars.

The significance of the much discussed line

Hir greeteste ooth was but "By Seint Loy!"

was expounded in a masterly article by Professor Lowes in the *Romanic Review* for 1914. With a wealth of learning and illustrative material, he showed how appropriate and felicitous was the Prioress's choice of this saint, and I think disposed finally of the suggestion that the Prioress invoked St. Loy as a patron saint of travelers or that she never swore at all. She did swear, and she swore by the most elegant and courtly saint in the calendar, one thoroughly representative of the feminine tastes which she preserved in spite of her devotion to religion. Professor Edith Rickert, however, reminds me of two facts neglected by Professor

Lowes. The first of these is that the Countess of Pembroke, one of the greatest ladies of the day, gave an image of St. Loy to the high altar of Grey Friars and that this church was the fashionable church of the time. There may, therefore, be a larger element of fashion in swearing by St. Loy than any of us have suspected.

One thing I miss in Professor Lowes's paper—namely, the explanation why Chaucer insists that this was her greatest oath. The simplicity of the explanation is doubtless the reason it was neglected. In the matter of swearing there was little difference between the habits of the upper classes in Chaucer's time and in the time of Shakespeare. When Shakespeare represents Hotspur as rebuking his wife for swearing like a comfit-maker's wife and urges her to use good mouth-filling oaths, he doubtless had in mind only the habits of the nobility in his own time and particularly those of good Queen Bess, who could match anyone in her court in picturesque and effective profanity. But what he wrote was equally true of earlier times. Not only the nobility, but dignitaries of the

church, swore, not merely by the saints, but by the persons of the Trinity and even, as Chaucer expressed it, dismembered the body of our Lord. The favorite oath of King Henry II, as we learn from Jocelyn of Brakelond, was "By the very eyes of God" (*Per veros oculos Dei*) and the same writer represents the great Abbot Samson as continually swearing *Per faciem Dei.* Compared with such oaths as these or those exemplified in the *Pardoner's Tale*, the Prioress's "By Seint Loy" is mild indeed and indicative of her extreme delicacy.

Concerning her dogs, a word or two may be added. It is true, as some writers have pointed out, that dispensations might be obtained for the keeping of dogs by prioresses who were fond of hunting, but the dogs of the Prioress were not hunting dogs, but pets, perhaps lapdogs; Chaucer expressly says "smale houndes." What he is emphasizing is not the Prioress's fondness for sports, for which she appears to have had no taste, but her preservation of that feminine need of some object upon which to lavish a natural human affection which the stricter zealots of the

church regarded as interfering with entire devotion to God. This is indicated by a prohibition addressed to the nuns of Chatteras in Cambridgeshire in 1345. "We enjoin also that neither dogs nor little birds be kept by the abbess or by any nun within the limits of the convent and especially within the choir when they should be engaged in divine service." It should be noted that the prohibitions of the keeping of pets by nuns were often, both in the Middle Ages and in modern times, relaxed for the benefit of the older nuns. Perhaps this may imply that Chaucer's Prioress was not so young as some of us have conceived her.

I do not remember ever to have seen any satisfactory explanation of the Prioress's singing.

> Ful wel she song the service divyne,
> Entunëd in hir nose ful semëly.

Bearing in mind the nasal whine associated in some modern religious sects with extreme piety, and remembering that Robert Louis Stevenson tells us that the beautiful, clear

singing-tones of the Samoan natives were displaced by their imitation of the singing of the missionaries, I at one time thought that the explanation of the lines was to be sought in an affectation of piety. But this explanation did not seem entirely satisfactory, and I sought light from my friend Dr. J. Lewis Browne, for many years leader of the choir of St. Patrick's Church in Chicago and one of the foremost American authorities on Gregorian music. From the stores of his knowledge Dr. Brown gave me an explanation which was confirmed by other authorities of the Catholic Church. It appears that while the solos of the church service are sung with clear, pure tone, it was, and still is, the practice to chant the long passages of recitative in a manner accurately described as "entuned in the nose." I have since learned that this is also the practice of Buddhist monks. Experience has demonstrated that this mode of voice production is less fatiguing to the vocal organs than the ordinary mode of singing. The lines therefore refer only to the participation of the Prioress in the parts of the service which were sung by the full convent.

It is well known that the "pair of beads" which the Prioress wore upon her arm was what is now called a rosary. For many years I believed and taught statements about the rosary which I now find were entirely incorrect. A pair of beads, I taught, consisted properly of fifteen decades of small beads separated by larger ones called "gauds." But it appears that these large rosaries were a later development. In Chaucer's time the paternoster, or pair of beads, consisted usually of either ten or twelve beads. That carried by the Prioress was doubtless either one of ten beads, like that shown on Chaucer's arm in the Hoccleve portrait, or one of twelve, like some of those mentioned in the will of Sir Thomas Cumberworth. The rosary of fifteen decades, called Our Lady's Psalter, seems to have been just coming into use in the beginning of the fifteenth century. The most interesting document on the subject known to me is Hoccleve's poem in the second volume of his *Minor Poems* recently edited by Sir Israel Gollancz.

Finally, I have a new suggestion to make concerning the meaning of the famous and

much discussed lines about the Prioress's French. Chaucer says, you remember:

> And French she spak ful faire and fetisly,
> After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,
> For French of Paris was to hir unknowe.

Most scholars have taken these lines as a pleasant jibe at the rusticity of the Prioress. Professor Skeat came valiantly to her defense with the contention that her French was Anglo-Norman French, which he contended was still the usual speech of the English court and king and therefore as good as the French of the king of France. Chaucer was not indulging, Professor Skeat contended, in a bit of good-humored ridicule, but only stating a simple fact as a fact. But this is hard to believe. The whole portrait is full of humor and pleasant jibes. Our new evidence offers a new explanation and a further example of Chaucer's use of realistic detail. One may be sure that while so great a lady as the queen's sister was resident at Stratford, she would have furnished the model for the speaking of French. But her French was not that of Paris, but like that of the Queen herself, the

kind of French spoken in Hainaut, a province of what we now call Flanders. When I recited these facts to Sir Frank Heath, one of the editors of the well-known Globe edition of Chaucer, he remarked, "And wouldn't Chaucer's enjoyment of his jibe have been the greater because his wife Philippa was also from Hainaut and probably also spoke 'after the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe?'"

The Second Nun

I had intended to discuss only the Prioress and the Wife of Bath in this lecture, but the attendants of the Prioress are such shadowy figures in the *Prologue* that the inclusion of them can hardly violate the canons of unity. It is clear that Chaucer himself had formed no very definite conception of the Second Nun. All he has to say about her in the *Prologue* is the very natural statement, long a puzzle but now well understood, that she was chaplain, that is, a sort of private secretary and general assistant, to the Prioress. And it does not appear that he ever achieved any clear idea of her person or character. There-

fore he left the one and a half lines of the sketch unfinished and when she tells her tale, he allows her to do so without a word of introduction or comment. He merely says:

> Whan ended was the Lyf of Seint Cecile,
> Er we hadde riden fully fyvë mile
> At Boghton-under-Blee, us gan atake
> A man that clothëd was in clothës blake.

The Nuns' Priest

Of the Nuns' Priest also Chaucer had, I think, when he wrote the *Prologue,* no very clear conception, though, for reasons which will be given very soon, he even then planned to have only one. But he did later achieve a very delightful conception of the Priest, which he has conveyed to his readers with marvelous skill, partly through a few lines of conversation between Priest and Host, but still more, it would seem, by the character and quality of the tale told by him. It was perhaps when he conceived the Priest in such form and character and gave him the tale which has immortalized him that Chaucer felt obliged to change his original conception

of the Monk and transform him from the splendid worldly scorner of labor and books whom we know in the *Prologue* to the sad-faced pedant with a hundred tragedies in his cell who greets our astonished ears when the Host calls upon him to tell his tale.

The discussion in regard to the puzzling "prestes thre" would, probably, have taken a different turn had more care been exercised to learn precisely the relations of priests to convents of nuns. There is no ground for maintaining that three priests were attached to the convent of St. Leonard's at Stratford-atte-Bowe. The evidence which we have bears out the statements made by Fosbroke on the authority of Lyndwood. The nuns' confessor, he says, was appointed by the bishop, and unless otherwise specified was the incumbent of the parish. Certainly the only priest with whom the nuns of Stratford seem to have had official relations was the parish priest. You will recall the mention of the incumbent of 1375 in the will of the Countess Elizabeth. "I bequeath," she says, "to Sir Geoffrey, parish priest (*capell paroch*) three and a half yards of blanket," and she names him as the

first of the executors of her will. The benefice of the church of Bromley was a curacy, and the advowson always belonged to the convent or nunnery of St. Leonard's. The Nuns' priest, therefore, was apparently not a priest specially assigned to residence in the nunnery, but the priest of the parish, who had official relations with the nunnery as confessor. So small a convent as that of St. Leonard's, which at the time of its foundation and at the time of Henry VIII's survey had only nine nuns, would certainly not have required the services of more than one confessor. The apparent youth of the Nuns' Priest makes it very unlikely that he was the Geoffrey de Neunton who in 1375 was executor of the will of Elizabeth of Hainaut. I have been unable to discover who were Geoffrey's immediate successors in the parish.

All the evidence of all kinds is, in fact, strongly against the correctness of the reading "prestes thre" which appears in all the manuscripts. Nowhere else in the *Canterbury Tales* is there mention of more than one priest. There is no need for more than one, and if there be only one, Chaucer's state-

ment that there were "nine and twenty" pilgrims assembled at the Tabard is accurately correct. Moreover, it is to be observed that the Second Nun and the Nuns' Priest or Priests are the only characters in the *Prologue* who are left entirely undescribed. The most reasonable hypothesis seems to be that Chaucer had intended to supply portraits of the Second Nun and the Priest but had got no further with this plan than the words:

> Another Nonnë with hir haddë she,
> That was hir chapëleyne . . .

What were his reasons for stopping at this point, whether he felt unprepared at the moment to paint a portrait of another nun, or whether, as has just been suggested, he had not yet decided upon the models for the Second Nun and the Priest, we shall doubtless never know. But it seems reasonably certain that he did intend to present portraits of the Second Nun and the Nuns' Priest, that this plan was left unexecuted, and the manuscript, left incomplete at this point, was filled out by some thoughtless person who, to secure a

rhyme, filled out the line with the words "and prestes thre."

I will add only a brief comment on a matter of detail and then turn to a more substantial figure. Commentators agree in informing us that when in the closing lines of his tale the Nuns' Priest quotes an habitual saying of his lord's, he is referring to the archbishop of Canterbury. This statement is based upon a fifteenth century gloss; but the parish of Bromley was in the diocese of London and the archdeaconry of Middlesex, and the Priest's lord was the bishop of London, who at that time was Robert Braybroke. Elizabeth of Hainaut's will, as we saw, was probated in the commissary court of the bishop of London. This is conclusive evidence, but there has never been any occasion for doubt in the matter.

The Wife of Bath

Professor Walter C. Curry, in an interesting series of articles on Chaucer's use of the science of his time, particularly physiology, medicine, and astrology, in building up the

portraits of his characters, in motivating their actions, and in explaining certain events in the *Tales*, has devoted two papers to the Wife of Bath. His view seems to be that Chaucer's characters are not portraits drawn from life but artificial constructions from scientific data. Chaucer's point of departure for a portrait, if I understand Professor Curry, would be the scientific summary of the physical and psychological characteristics of a temperament or the features of physique, character, and incident determined by an astrological horoscope. That Chaucer was thoroughly acquainted with these branches of mediæval science, that he made much use of their terms in setting forth the qualities, physical, mental, and moral, of his *dramatis personæ* has long been known and has been well emphasized and richly illustrated by the recent contributions of Professor Curry, but the evidence seems to me to be strongly against the view that the persons of Chaucer's pilgrimage are artificial constructions assembled from the abstract conceptions of mediæval science.

With regard to the Wife of Bath, I shall not undertake a critical examination of Pro-

fessor Curry's views. But certain facts which seem to point to her real existence and to a personal knowledge of her by the poet deserve at least passing consideration. How vivid and individual a figure she is I need not remind you, but I should like to refresh your recollection by recalling some of the details.

That she is depicted as possessing a number of traits common to all women of her class and general type is true; if it were otherwise, she would not be representative. She is a weaver and comes from that part of England in which weaving had been a flourishing industry for at least a hundred and fifty years. Moreover, a notable feature of the weaving industry was the prominent part taken in it by women. One of the latest and best histories of the trade, that of Lipson, says:

> The employment of women workers has always been a marked feature of the woolen industry. They served as wool-sorters and wool-wrappers, carders and spinners, dyers and weavers. One fourth of the cloth woven in York at the end of the fourteenth century was the work of women, and they were enrolled as appren-

> tices and admitted to the membership of the crafts. A large portion of the cloth made at Wakefield in 1396 was manufactured in "Emma Earle's weaving sheds" . . . The wool-packers of Southampton . . . seem to have been entirely women, and they afford a unique example of a women's industrial gild. They were organized as a company of women artisans and were governed by two wardens elected by the women from their own ranks.

Perhaps it was to a gild of this sort that Chaucer refers when he represents the Wife as so angrily insistent upon her rights of precedence at "the offrynge." There were, however, also in Somerset gilds organized on the basis of sex and age as well as those on a mere trade basis. For instance, at Croscombe, near Bath, there were in the fifteenth century, and probably earlier, separate gilds of youths, maidens, and wives. At services the gild of wives must have offered as a body, for we read of "the Wives' taper" and of sums given by "the Wives." It may be that, as Chaucer's words suggest, they went forward in a body, and his Wife always insisted upon leading the way.

Chaucer's words about the Wife's skill seem complimentary and sincere:

> Of clooth-makyng she haddë swich an haunt,
> She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

but Chaucer indulges in irony to a degree not always recognized. Alton and Holland, in *The King's Customs*, are confident that this encomium is ironical. They point out that it was enacted in Richard II's reign "that all West-Country cloth should be exposed for sale open, as merchants who had bought it by the bale and had taken it abroad had been in danger of their lives from the incensement of buyers who had found the bales deceptive." Can it be that this had anything to do with the active controversy between the Merchant and the Wife on the pilgrimage?

But not necessarily typical of Somerset weavers are certain other traits which Chaucer ascribes to the Wife of Bath. She was an addict to pilgrimages. She had visited the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem no less than three times, and as a year was the time necessary for this trip, no one but a lover of travel

would have undertaken it. She had seen the Vernicle and other relics at Rome; she had worshipped at the shrine of St. James at Compostella and at that of the Three Kings in Cologne cathedral. She had also made the shorter pilgrimage to Boulogne, where the wonder-working Virgin, worshipped especially by sailors, is still loaded with votive offerings. This shrine, if none of the others, Chaucer himself is likely to have seen, as in 1360 King John of France, prisoner in England since the battle of Creçy, made a pilgrimage to it, accompanied by the sons of Edward III; and Chaucer was then in the service of one of them, Lionel duke of Clarence. Whether she had ever before visited the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury does not appear.

Every detail of the Wife's character shows that she went on pilgrimages primarily not for religion but for their social advantages. She was not a young woman; her riding equipment was hardly fashionable, and she still wore the coverchief, or kerchief, which had not been "in style" since the middle of

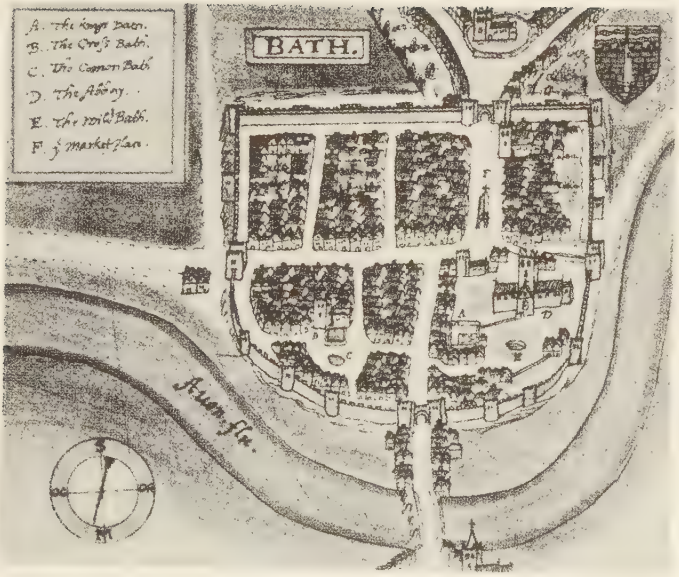
the century. But she was a woman of means and, as she not unreasonably felt, of substantial attractions. She had had five husbands and in her youth many lovers, and had grown wise in the affairs of love.

Although Chaucer borrowed from the *Roman de la Rose* some traits of her description, she is by no means "La Vielle" of that celebrated poem. There are many touches which indicate that Chaucer had a particular person in mind. Not only is her name given —Alysoun—and her striking costume described in much detail, her personality includes two characteristics by no means borrowed or typical; she is deaf and "gat-toothed." Moreover, Chaucer writes as if he had seen her in her native place.

She was not from Bath, but, as the poet expressly says, "from bisyde Bathe." This seems vague but is in reality extraordinarily definite. Only by a visit to Bath would Chaucer have been likely to represent her as living *beside* rather than *in* the town. In his time the little Roman city was still confined almost entirely within its ancient walls and lay in a loop of the river Avon, which sur-

rounded it on the east and south and about half the west side. But outside the north gate, there had grown up the parish of St. Michael-without-the-Walls, or St. Michael-without-the-North-Gate — also sometimes designated as *juxta Bathon.* This parish consisted of two streets forming an angle with the apex at the gate of the city, and facing this stood the ancient square-towered church of St. Michael, with its large enclosed churchyard. All this appears plainly in a sixteenth century picture-map of Bath, which shows even the church door where the Wife married her five husbands.

In 1391, a Geoffrey Chaucer, apparently the poet, was appointed one of the two deputy foresters of the royal forest of Petherton, about three miles south of Bridgewater. While, owing to the loss of the records, there is no direct evidence that he performed his duties in person and lived, at least a part of the year, in the park house at Newton Plecy, there is every probability that, at any rate later, when he was sole deputy, he at least visited his charge. If so, he would have ridden past the little village of Walcot, strung



Bath in 1588
(William Smith, *A Particular Description of England*)

along the road about half a mile from Bath, and then have ridden along Walcot street past St. Michael's church to the north gate, for this was the main London road. From the charters and other records of the time we know that most of the cottages in St. Michael's parish were of one story, made of the mixture of clay and straw called wattle and whitewashed with lime, with thatched roofs, and instead of chimneys "smoke holis" in the middle of the roof. There were, however, some two-story houses, with tiled roofs, and one with a cupola, and posts supporting the second story. In Walcot street and against the gate were shops and stalls, but there were also gardens separated by walls or hedges of hawthorn.

Although we cannot know the name of the original of Chaucer's Alysoun, the Bath records tell us something about the "gossips" with whom she walked about the town and in the fields. Among them were Emma Salp' and Agnes her daughter, who lived north of the church; Edith atte Jete, who had a stall just outside the north gate; Alice de Wyke, who for reasons unknown paid William Bur-

rell's rent for him; and Edith Hooper, Angnes Chete and Angnes Corbet, all of whom had houses in their own names. It is perhaps also worth recording that in the volume of *Ancient Deeds* published in 1921 by the Bath Records Society Alice (or Alysoun) seems the commonest name among the women who figure in these documents, and curiously enough more than one of these Alices rejoiced in three or more husbands, though I can find none who had clearly achieved five.

Apparently most of those named in the records were women of some means and some degree of independence. Whether, like the Wife, they were weavers does not appear from the *Ancient Deeds*, but no doubt many of them were. If they were members of a gild with a rule like that of Southampton, commanding the members "not to bawle nor scold oon with anither," we may suspect that over a question of precedence more than one of them would have been as negligent in observing it as would the Wife of Bath herself.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, VI

THE CANON AND HIS YEOMAN

One of the most curious and interesting episodes of the Canterbury pilgrimage is that of the Canon and his Yeoman.

After the Second Nun has told her pious tale of the life and martyrdom of St. Cecilia, the pilgrims are overtaken, you will recall, by two men who have obviously ridden fast and far. Their horses are wet with sweat and flecked with foam, and they themselves bear evident signs of their hard riding. They are clearly man and master, the master being revealed by his dress as a canon of the church. They explain that they had seen the jolly company of pilgrims as it left the inn in the early morning and had tried to overtake them for the sake of the pleasure of riding with them and hearing their talk. The Host welcomes them in somewhat guarded language, for his observant eye as well as Chaucer's has

already noted that the Canon had little luggage—

> It seemëd that he caried lite aray:
> Al light for somer rood this worthy man—

and that his clothes were shabby and torn and dirty. He suggests, perhaps ironically, that the Canon is both wise and sportive, and pertinently inquires whether he can tell a merry tale or two for the entertainment of the company. "He can indeed," replies the Yeoman; but either because this is untrue or because he wishes to get down to business without loss of time, he begins at once to brag of the accomplishments of his master, using no doubt the patter he is accustomed to use to kindle the interest and credulity of strangers and prepare the way for his master's swindling. The Canon, so says his Yeoman, has such science and power that he could, if he wished, pave the whole road to Canterbury with silver and gold. This is a little too much for the Host, whose long experience as an innkeeper had possibly rendered him suspicious of the claims of the Wallingfords of his day. "This is a strange

thing," says he; "if your master has such science and skill, why is his cloak torn and dirty and his attire so sluttish?" And continuing his sly cross-examination, he forces the Yeoman to admit that he and his master live in the suburbs of a town among thieves and robbers; that they practise alchemy, but their experiments have always gone wrong; and that the Yeoman himself, for his own part, has gained only bleared eyes, a discolored face, poverty, and continual sorrow and distress. The Canon, overhearing these revelations, attempts by threats to silence the Yeoman, but failing to do so, spurs his horse and dashes away, never to be seen again. The Yeoman, relieved by the flight of his master, declares that he will never again meet with him for any consideration, and continues his discourse with a detailed account of the shady operations of his master in which, greatly to his own sorrow and loss, he has been a dazed and fascinated participator.

The Yeoman's account of his master's continual pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir, that elusive object or formula whose occult powers would make possible not only

the manufacture of gold from baser metals but the control of all the forces of life and the prolongation of life itself—his story of the unfailing disappointments, with the frequent explosions of the retorts, is well prepared for by the sudden outburst, under the Host's questioning, of the Yeoman's long-suppressed sense of failure and of injuries. The skepticism of the Host concerning the wonderful knowledge and skill of the Canon, and his sly question about the Yeoman's discolored face, awakening memories of the labors, the discomforts, and the disappointments of the experiments, had broken down the Yeoman's professional manner and his habitual reticence. The state of mind into which he is thus thrown perhaps explains the skilfully confused account which he gives of his master's aims, methods, and experiences. For in spite of his promise that he intends to declare such things as he knows, he does not give a plain, straightforward narrative of his experiences. Names of the materials and implements of alchemy, technical terms for some of the processes, glimpses of unfortunate experiences in actual experiments, are

all jumbled together by Chaucer with consummate art in order to produce a picture of an ignorant helper who has no clear understanding of the mysterious undertakings in which he has borne a part, and an impression of the wild irrationality of this pursuit of the impossible. Talk of mercury, bole armonyak, valerian, and orpiment, of calcination, citrination, albification, and fermentation, of alambikes, crosletz, descensories, and sublimatories, of matters combust and coagulate, of the four spirits and the seven bodies, is inextricably interwoven with bits of concrete experience and with bitter comment upon this "elvyssh, nyce lore" which always ends in disappointment and loss and distress. The result is not a tale but an exposition conveying a vivid sense of the hopelessness of the art of alchemy and the miserable deceptions of its dupes.

But when the Yeoman has finished this he has fulfilled his promise to the Host and the Pilgrims to expose the career of his master. Nobody asks him to tell a tale or even suggests that a tale is expected of him. Nevertheless he is not satisfied with what he has

revealed, but immediately begins and tells clear through to its end what is properly called "The Canon's Yeoman's Tale"—a well and clearly organized story of the swindling operations of another alchemist, who, significantly enough, is, like the Yeoman's master, a canon of the church.

With Chaucer's art in the account of the Canon's "cursed craft" and in the tale proper we are not at present concerned. I wish merely to emphasize three features, well enough known but perhaps not seen in their full significance. The first of these is the startlingly minute realistic detail of the Yeoman's exposition and narrative; the second is the profound and detailed mastery of the technical terms and processes of alchemy on the part of Chaucer necessary for the composition of the Yeoman's account of his master's doings; the third is the bitterness of tone displayed in all the references to alchemy and Chaucer's probable motive in choosing such a subject for one of his tales.

The generalized account of the practices of the Yeoman's lord is artfully confused, but there shine in it reports of unsuccessful ex-

An Alchemist's Laboratory
(British Museum MS. Adds. 10,302, f. 1a)

periments, vivid sense impressions of fires kept burning day and night, and of hot rammish odors of brimstone, and realistic bits of the talk of the Canon and his dupes when the retort explodes and not only scatters the materials which they were trying to turn into gold, but demolishes the walls of the building. These, no less than the minutely detailed steps of the processes by which the canon of the tale proper gains the confidence of the priest and swindles him, bear the marks of an intimacy of knowledge suggestive of very close contact with this extraordinary delusion. If this were all, one might well contend that Chaucer had merely heard something of the many swindling tricks practised in his day as in all ages and had worked them into a story. He might even have got also from hearsay and observation that underlying hint that despite all the knavery and deception practised by the professors of the art, there was yet some fundamental truth in the fleeting science, a possibility that just the right processes applied to the right materials under just the right conditions would one day

capture Elixir and make a man rich and wise and happy forever.

But this is not all. Such a mastery of the technical terms for the materials and processes of alchemy not only could not have been picked up by the Canon's Yeoman, no matter how long he had served his master, it could not have been "got up" by Chaucer for the purpose of writing this tale without an incredible amount of reading and labor. Indeed it is practically unbelievable that this expert knowledge was got up for a special occasion. Anyone familiar with the subject will testify that no single treatise or small number of treatises on alchemy would have provided all the technical terms and ideas exploited by Chaucer in this tale and prologue. Such breadth and accuracy of knowledge as he displays could have been the fruit only of a profound and prolonged devotion to the subject—at least as long and serious as that which gave him his knowledge of astronomy and astrology.

Why—we may then ask—why and when did Chaucer obtain this knowledge? Remembering his long list of famous physicians and

his apparent familiarity with the technical terms of the physiological and medical science of his day, remembering also his treatise on the Astrolabe and the innumerable evidences of his thorough study of astrology, I was formerly inclined to ascribe these interests and his interest in alchemy to a somewhat modern scientific curiosity on the part of Chaucer, fostered no doubt not only by some of the sixty books which formed his extraordinary library, but probably also by personal contact with learned men. His interest in medical science might well have been derived from the great surgeon John Arderne, who practised in London from 1370 to 1377, or one of the many physicians retained by the king or John of Gaunt; that in astrology also perhaps from the astronomer and traveler Nicholas of Lynn, a Carmelite friar, who in 1386 composed a calendar for John of Gaunt, and who is cited by Chaucer himself in the *Astrolabe* as an authority. From whom he derived his interest in alchemy and his knowledge of it I was unable even to guess. But in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* for 1922 H. G. Richardson, Esq., produced from the Plea Rolls

evidence of an alchemist with whom Chaucer, as a member of the royal household and frequent visitor to Windsor, was almost inevitably acquainted. Let us hear Mr. Richardson.

After a brief account of one John de Walden, who in 1350 had apparently lain in prison in the Tower because he had failed in his alchemical experiments on 500 crowns of gold and 20 pounds of silver which he had received from the king's treasure "to work thereon by the art of alchemy for the benefit of the king," Mr. Richardson continues:

> Of another alchemist who also had dealings with the Crown we have more: we are given indeed something like a formula for alchemic gold, but unfortunately the process cannot be regarded as successful. William de Brumley, chaplain, lately dwelling with the Prior of Harmandsworth, was arrested, by order of the King's Council, with four counterfeit pieces of gold upon him. He expressly acknowledged that he had, by the art of alchemy, made these pieces from gold and silver and other medicines, to wit *sal armoniak, vitriol, and golermonik*

(whatever that may be). The process had occupied him five weeks, and he had taken the pieces to Gautron, the Keeper of the King's money at the Tower, and offered to sell them to him if they appeared to him of any value. William had before sold to Gautron a piece of this sort of metal for 18*s.*, but of what weight it was he did not know. He said that he made the metal according to the teaching (*per doctrinam*) of William Shuchirch, canon of the King's Chapel at Windsor.

Can this, we ask (I am still quoting Mr. Richardson), be the canon whom Chaucer had in mind when he wrote the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale:* had William Shuchirch earned the poet's resentment and as Tyrwhitt suggested, 'determined Chaucer to interrupt the course of his work in order to insert a satire against the alchemists?'

There are some facts which dispose us to reply affirmatively to Mr. Richardson's query. In Chaucer's story not only is the Yeoman's master a canon, but—and this is another feature of the episode that I wish to emphasise—the alchemist in the Yeoman's Tale is also a canon—and as the Yeoman distinctly de-

clares, not the same person as his master. If Chaucer had not a real canon definitely in mind, why did he so insist on this point? Why did he make both alchemists canons? But some one may try to save Canon William Shuchirch of the King's Chapel at Windsor from this bad eminence by pointing out that apparently his formula worked, whereas both of Chaucer's canons were apparently rogues and swindlers. It is true that two separate juries—one of six laymen, the other of three experts—valued the four pieces offered by William Brumley at 35*s.*, but they declared them not to be pure gold and it may well be that this poor chaplain—like the annular priest of the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*—met with apparent success at first only to lose largely later.

Is it too wild a speculation to wonder whether Chaucer himself had been a victim? Is there no hint of bitterness in his satire? Certain lines in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* proper—what manuscripts and editors call Part II—suggest very strongly that that tale was originally composed, not for inclusion in the Canterbury series, but to be read

or recited to an audience which included some canons of the church. I refer of course to lines 992 ff.:

But worshipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth not that I desclaundre youre
hous,
Although my talë of a chanoun be.

I do not dare to suggest that the tale was read at Windsor, but I will say that if it had been read there, the canons there would have been very apt to think of Brother William Shuchirch when they heard the lines that immediately follow:

And God forbede that al a compaignye
Sholde rewe a singuleer mannës folye.
To sclaundre you is nothyng myn entente,
But to correcten that is mys, I mente.
This talë was not oonly toold for yow,
But eek for othere mo; ye woot wel how
That among Christës apostelës twelve
There nas no traytour but Judas hymselve.
Thanne why sholde al the remenant have
a blame,
That giltlees were? By yow I seye the
same,

Save oonly this, if ye wol herknë me,—
If any Judas in your covent be,
Remoeveth hym bitymës, I yow rede,
If shame, or los, may causen any drede;
And beeth nothyng displesed, I yow preye,
But in this cas herkneth what I shal seye.

Whether aided only by his reading of authorities or under the guidance of Canon William Shuchirch of the king's chapel at Windsor, where, as clerk of the king's works, Chaucer was in the spring of 1390 busy about repairs of St. George's Chapel, would not the pursuit of Elixir, the Philosopher's Stone, explain the poverty which Chaucer's biographers attribute to him in the later years of his life?

That Chaucer did occasionally borrow small sums from the Exchequer is clearly shown by the records. On three occasions in 1398, July 14, and 21, and August 23, he borrowed 6*s.*, 8*d.* This sum is of course not so small as it sounds today. It is not the equivalent of $1.75 but of $40 or $50; and, as has been pointed out, possibly the explanation of the borrowing lies not so much in Chaucer's necessities as in the infrequent pres-

ence of money in the Exchequer and Chaucer's readiness to take his share when it was available. This was a time of much unrest. Richard may have had little money in his Exchequer, Henry IV was certainly in financial straits during the first years of his reign, and it is to be noted that on the last of the dates given above Chaucer borrowed not only 6*s.* 8*d.* but an additional 106*s.* 8*d.*

But on more than one occasion, as scholars have pointed out, Chaucer did plead poverty as the basis for additional grants from the king. If the plea was true, if he really was in poverty, an explanation would seem to be required. On evidence so abundant that it can hardly be questioned, we have seen that Chaucer came of a well-to-do family. Even if we suppose that he was a younger son who inherited very little of the property of his ancestors—and there is no evidence for such a supposition—he not only received an excellent training for a business career and was of sufficient social and financial standing to marry into the lesser gentry, he actually held official appointments which for a number of years (1374-86) produced an annual income

conservatively estimated as having a present purchasing value of at least $15,000, and even after the death of his wife had pensions, and perquisites worth not less than $6000 a year.

I do not believe that the borrowing of small sums or the plea of poverty in a petition should be interpreted as they have been. The plea of poverty—*pur Dieu et en oevre de charite*—is an usual formula and need not be taken any more seriously than the jesting lines to his empty purse. That he was at times in need of ready money—even small sums—is true. Not only did he borrow from the King's Exchequer as has been noted, but on Sunday, July 28, 1392—only fifteen days after he had received twenty marks in part payment of the balance due him as clerk of the king's works—he borrowed from a merchant who had accommodated many of his friends and acquaintances the sum of 26*s.* 8*d.* to be repaid the following Saturday. Of course it must be borne in mind that there was comparatively little money in circulation in Chaucer's England. Men's wealth consisted largely in lands, houses,

jewels, fine clothes, and the like, and many a rich man was often in need of ready money and obliged to resort to the merchants and professional money lenders for it. The list of persons who borrowed from the merchant just referred to includes a score of names of persons familiar to students of the *Life Records*—such persons as William Staunden and Adam Bamme (merchants and mayors of the city), Hugh Fastolf, Robert Parys, merchant and sometime marshal of the king's household, Henry Yeveley, the great builder and maker of the tombs of King Richard and Queen Anne, Henry Scogan, either Chaucer's intimate or his brother, and "John Gower esquier," who may have been the poet —substantial men all.

The vision so often entertained of Chaucer's old age of poverty may therefore be a delusion. It is certainly difficult to accept the suggestion that his borrowings were due to his having impoverished himself to buy lands for his son Thomas. This would hardly explain the small sums needed. It seems more likely that although not suffering from poverty, he was often, like so many of his wealth-

ier friends, in need of ready money—cash. And I prefer to amuse myself with guessing that he may have been cooperating with Canon William Shuchirch of the King's Chapel at Windsor in the pursuit of Elixir. Perhaps when he borrowed the 25*s.* or so, expecting to repay them with a bonus on Saturday, he was hoping for a successful "fixation of the Dragon." At any rate, there is a note of sincere feeling in the Yeoman's cry:

> But that science so fer is us biforn
> We mowen nat, although we hadde it sworn,
> It overtake—it slit awey so faste
> It wol us maken beggers atte laste.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, VII

THE OTHERS

We have discussed thirteen of the twenty-eight persons who started out from the Tabard with Geoffrey Chaucer and the Host on the memorable pilgrimage to Canterbury and also the two horsemen who overtook them not far from the end of the journey. Under the large licence afforded by the title of these lectures, I am free of any obligation to discuss the remaining fifteen, and for various reasons I have no intention of discussing any of them in detail. One of them—the Knight—I discussed many years ago; nine of them—the five tradesmen, the Squire and the Yeoman, the Manciple and the Plowman—seem to me thin, shadowy figures, some perhaps types, others little more than names; five—the Monk, the Cook, the Doctor, the Clerk, and the Parson—are more robust, perhaps marvelously constructed types, perhaps

drawing from some living model one or more individual traits.

Of all the studies tending to show that in painting the portraits of the Canterbury pilgrims Chaucer worked from living models, the earliest was perhaps the study of the Knight which I read before the American Philological Association in 1908 under the title "A Knight Ther Was." The evidence produced did not, to be sure, result in the disclosure of a single individual of whom it could be asserted with confidence that he was the original of the portrait of the Knight, but rather in establishing the fact that the career ascribed to the Knight was a possible and natural career and was illustrated even in minute detail by knights belonging to a family whose members were well known to Chaucer and were well-known figures of the day.

In making that study I proceeded upon the assumption that if the Knight were a realistic portrait, recognizable by Chaucer's readers, the original would certainly be a conspicuous figure of the time. Furthermore, it seemed highly probable that if he were such a person, he would have been called upon to

testify in the famous controversy in 1386 between the Scrope and Grosvenor families over the coat of arms "azure, a bend or," which each of them claimed. I therefore carefully examined the careers of the knights who testified in that controversy, with the result just stated. I found that all the campaigns of Chaucer's Knight lay on the borderland between the Christian world and heathendom and were features in the continual crusades of the fourteenth century. The campaigns fell into three groups: those against the Moors in Spain and northwestern Africa, those against the Saracens in Egypt and Asia Minor, and those against Slavic heathendom in Prussia and Lithuania. In these campaigns, which were among the most outstanding and picturesque events of the time, two members of the Scrope family—a family in whose behalf Chaucer himself testified—were prominent figures, and I suggested the possibility that the portrait might be a composite portrait of these two men.

This conclusion seemed to be generally accepted until 1916, when Professor Albert S. Cook published in the *Transactions of the*

Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences a paper entitled "The Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight." Professor Cook did not discuss my suggestion in detail, and agreed in the general conclusion that "Chaucer's Knight is a typical, in some sense a composite, figure." He contended, however, that the knights whose careers Chaucer had most definitely in mind were rather the elder earl of Derby, who died as duke of Lancaster, and his grandson, the younger earl of Derby, who died as Henry IV. With a wealth of quotations and illustrative material, some of which I was by space limitations obliged merely to refer to, and some of which had entirely escaped my attention, Professor Cook contributed greatly to the elucidation and vitalization of our conception of the Knight, though I still think that the Scropes fulfilled the conditions of the problem as well as the Derbys, and that Chaucer's Knight belonged rather to the social rank of the Scropes than to the more exalted rank of the Derbys. In any event, one cannot but be grateful for the illumination of Chaucer's picture furnished

by Professor Cook's learned and interesting article.

It would not be difficult to produce material illustrating more fully than has yet been done the accompanying figures of the Squire and the Knight's Yeoman. Such material would not change in any important respect the conceptions we now entertain of those characters, and although each of them possesses some traits which seem not typical, but individual, there is no reason to contend that they were drawn from life or to expect that evidence leading to a personal identification of them will ever come to light.

Of the thinly drawn figures the Manciple is perhaps, after the Second Nun, the thinnest. He is not an individual; he is not even a well-drawn, rounded type: he is merely a stalking horse from behind which Chaucer shoots a playful arrow at his learned masters of the Temple—capable of managing great estates but not wise enough to defeat the low cunning of their servant. The tale he tells is not appropriate to him and is indeed a very early chip from Chaucer's workshop, hewn off when he was still struggling to master the

rhetorical principles and practices of Matthieu de Vendôme and Geoffroi de Vinsauf. The only time the Manciple exhibits any trait of humanity—in any sense of the term—is when he offers a drink from his gourd to the quarrelsome Cook.

The five city tradesmen have been learnedly and, I think, convincingly discussed by Professor E. P. Kuhl. He treats them as a group, the only way in which the material furnished by the *Prologue* allows them to be treated. No doubt there would have been some individualization of them if Chaucer had completed his plan for the tales and their links. But alas, Chaucer was too busy or too broken a man to do much more than sketch the general plan of that immortal work, bring together a few tales of early workmanship, write a few new tales—masterpieces all—and a few links, change his mind two or three times about the proper assignment of tales, and then drop his pen, leaving his manuscripts, one must believe, in a state of confusion not always understood and disentangled by his literary executor. We cannot guess what tales the tradesmen were to tell or what

glimpses of trade jealousies and city politics might have been caught from lively encounters between them and the Host. I can add nothing of interest to what Professor Kuhl has so well set forth. My only suggestion is that the "solempne and gret fraternité" to which these wealthy citizens belonged was perhaps a fraternity of St. Thomas of Canterbury—he was, it will be remembered, the patron saint of the Mercers, a craft closely related to the Webbes, the Dyeres and the Tapiceres.

But if Chaucer left these great men grouped and ill-defined, he had from the very beginning a clear and definite interest in the Cook whom they had with them on the pilgrimage.—Are we to understand that they dined apart from the rest of the company? —The Cook is clearly individual. Every act and word ascribed to him are as definitely his as are the mormal on his shin or his personal name. I should not be surprised any day to come upon some document mentioning a London cook named Hogge of Ware, contemporary with Chaucer. The only reason it has not yet been found is, I firmly believe, be-

cause the records of petty crime from that period are scanty; even the Coroner's Rolls, those delightful and illuminating documents, have not been preserved as fully as one could wish.

The Monk, the Doctor, the Clerk, and the Parson are all fascinating puzzles, which invite to further investigation. All of them are strikingly characteristic of their respective stations and callings in life, and it would be easy to produce a volume of illustrative material about just such men as they are; but each of them has also some trait not characteristic of the type, that suggests an individual model, who either belonged to Chaucer's circle of acquaintances or had chanced to catch his observant eye.

The Parson no doubt conforms to more than one traditional "character" of the good parson, but no one can read the portrait in the *Prologue* without feeling that Chaucer had known and revered the man as a powerful and living reality.

The Doctor's accomplishments are those enumerated by John of Arderne and other writers since the days of Galen as befitting

the good physician, but one cannot help suspecting that Chaucer's picture of him in his robes of crimson and violet ("sangwyn and pers") and the innuendoes about his "diet," his "images," his "lectuaries," and his reasons for cherishing gold brought up to his contemporaries the person and name of a well-known physician.

If Chaucer had drawn only one university student, a skeptic might believe that he had artfully constructed a conception of the ideal student and merely touched in a personal trait or two for verisimilitude; and I will not deny that this is possibly true, but the vivid personalities of "hende Nicholas" of Oxford and "Alan" and "John" of Cambridge prove that he knew the students of both universities in their native haunts, and suggest that the portrait of the nameless Clerk of Oxenford, who claimed acquaintance with "Fraunceys Pertrak, the poet laureate," began with a real person even if it ended in the ideal.

As to the Monk, although Chaucer completely threw over the one described in the *Prologue* and substituted for him a gloomy and uninteresting person, who retains nothing

of the original brilliant figure except the horse with its jingling bells, he seems to me real—drawn from a living model. Perhaps he was too real. Perhaps he or some powerful friend of his read the sketch in the *Prologue* and suggested to Chaucer that it was unmistakable and undesired. Even now, after the lapse of more than half a millennium, I think that, given two or three guesses, I could name his monastery. But that is too long a story to be told now.

This is the last of these lectures which will attempt to deal with Chaucer's pilgrims. There is much more to say about Chaucer's technical training, about his powers of observation, about the way in which he worked himself as an artist free from the principles and methods of composition with which as a young man he began. But this would require another set of lectures. My effort in the present series has been largely to exhibit the results of treating Chaucer as one would a modern writer, of believing that behind his most vital and successful sketches lay the observation of living men and women, of assuming that some at least of the definite state-

ments made about them might be true, and then searching the records of his time to discover if by chance one could find persons answering accurately or nearly so to the descriptions he gave of them. I hope I have not been the victim of my own method. Whatever I may have said or have seemed to say in the enthusiasm of developing my theme, I not only recognize that the results are highly speculative, I also am as far from believing that Chaucer merely photographed his friends and acquaintances as I am from believing that more abhorrent doctrine that he built up his matchless pictures of human life entirely by piecing together scraps from old books, horoscopes, astrological and physiological generalizations, bits from Ovid and Jean de Meun and Machaut and the treatises on vices and virtues. His method of character drawing was, I believe, that of all good artists. From the experiences and observations of his life, his imagination derived the materials for its creative processes. And I have not a doubt that his circle of friends, when they read the *Prologue*, the links, and the latest of the *Canterbury Tales*, said to one

another—as the friends of all artists do: "He got the idea of this character from John and that from Bess, this trait from Henry and that from George." At any rate, the attempt to read Chaucer in this way has given me an even greater interest in his work than I had before; and I shall be happy if some of my readers can share my delight.

CHAUCER AS ARTIST

It is no longer necessary to contend that Chaucer was a great poet. The investigations of the past half century and the increasing study of his poetry in schools and colleges have removed the main obstacles to a knowledge and understanding of his language, and his merits have become generally recognized. He is securely placed as one of the three greatest poets who have ever written in English, and in this group of three he bids fair to move up from third place to second. Shakespeare is supreme and unassailable. Milton, who for two centuries was placed next to Shakespeare, is perhaps not so secure in that position as he once was. This is less his fault than his misfortune. The failure of his theology to maintain its hold upon the minds and hearts of men has unduly affected the appreciation of his poetry. His choice of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy instead of the Copernican as the basis for his

cosmogony has been similarly unfortunate. Unfortunate too for his appeal to most present-day readers is that feature of his style which, in his own time and for more than a century later, was perhaps the most potent cause of his hold upon men of the highest cultivation—I mean the splendor of his diction and the rich fabric of classical reminiscences spread before the reader in every line of his verse. Changes in taste no less than in culture have made what was once the source of his greatest power a real obstacle to appreciation of the essential poetry underlying this rich but thick embroidery. Chaucer, on the other hand, has steadily profited by these changes in taste and culture. The study of his language and versification has not only made him more easily intelligible, but has revealed the purity of his diction and the beauty and skill of his versification. Classical allusions there are, to be sure, in his works, and classical allusions are caviare to the reading public of the twentieth century; but his classical allusions are simple; he wrote for a public almost as ignorant of classical literature as is the public of today. Meanwhile,

there has been a growing appreciation of the wide range of his poetical endowments—his sensitiveness to beauty, his humor, his mastery of a genuine and unforced pathos, the delicacy of his sense for characteristic detail, the subtlety and accuracy of his psychology, the universality of his sympathy, and the sureness of his dramatic instinct. And it is not in English-speaking countries only that his fame has grown. He has been studied and translated in Germany, France, and Italy, and has commanded the admiration of critics in these alien centers as well as in the land of his birth.

But notwithstanding the amount of study which has been devoted to his works and to the times in which he lived and the conditions under which he wrote, many readers still feel that Chaucer was great only by native endowment, that conscious art was not a factor in his accomplishment; and some critics, even if they do not believe this, write as if it were true. Strangely enough, naïveté and unsophistication are still occasionally counted as among the elements of his charm. Tributes to him as the poet of the dawn, innocently

lisping in accents of beauty because he was near to nature and lived in a world as yet uncontaminated, are still quoted with approval by those who should know better.

How such a view can survive any knowledge of the civilization of the fourteenth century is a mystery. To the men of the fourteenth century the world seemed as old, as sophisticated, as corrupt as it has seemed to the men of any later century; and the new developments in government, in the organization of society, in commerce, in religion, in philosophy, and in the arts seemed as modern as any similar developments have seemed since. The elaborate and splendid structure of feudalism, which for centuries had determined the forms of government, of social life, and of social ideals, though still cherished with almost fanatic enthusiasm by some of the older generation, was crumbling to decay and was being rapidly replaced by the new forces of commercialism and the powerful, though as yet chaotic, stirrings of the common people. Even in the high places of government and in the official household of the king the old families were being displaced

by the newly rich—who had made vast fortunes in trade and in finance; but there was no diminution in public or private extravagance and lavish splendor. In every country of Europe, corruption in church, in state, in trade, in industry, in all the professions, and in the daily lives of men and women of every rank in society from the highest to the lowest was being assailed by satirists as an indubitable manifestation of the senility and decay of the social order and the certain precursor of its end. In France the list of moral satires is too long even to quote—they may be sampled in Professor Langlois' well-known survey; in England we have only to cite the French and Latin works of John Gower, the poems of the *Piers Plowman* group, *Winner and Waster, The Parlement of the Three Ages*, and the multitude of minor poems edited by Thomas Wright. The attacks upon the Church—that most powerful and highly organized system of social control that the world has ever seen —were no longer, as they had been in previous centuries, attacks upon individual abuses with which corrupt men had defiled a sacred and perfect system; they were leveled at

the principles upon which the sacred system had been built up and they threatened its very existence. This is the reason why the anti-Catholics of the sixteenth century looked back to John Wyclif as their progenitor rather than to Robert Grosseteste or any of the other great spirits who had attempted reforms within the Church. Distasteful to the orthodox hierarchy as were Wyclif's views on transubstantiation, there was ultimately more danger for the ecclesiastical system in his political philosophy, in his views on dominion and on the source and limits of the authority of priests. His philosophical ideas, which were the origin and cause of his heresy concerning the sacrament, were of course the outcome of centuries of philosophical speculation and discussion as subtle and profound as those of Kant or Hegel or Bergson. His views on dominion—that is, on the nature, sources, limitations, and distribution of the powers of government—run straight back to Aristotle, through a line of political thinkers, among whom one of the most recent, Marsiglio of Padua, held theories that are at times scarcely distinguishable from modern democ-

racy. In science the fourteenth century can boast little that is original, but it had enough to do to assimilate the great achievements and formulations of the thirteenth, and it is to be borne in mind that the systems of St. Thomas Aquinas and Vincent of Beauvais are still vital elements in Catholic education. Of the great achievements of the fourteenth century in several of the arts there is little need to remind you. On every hand rose cathedrals, abbeys, and parish churches that have not since been surpassed; and sculptured wood and stone are convincing witnesses of the craftsmanship and the artistry of fourteenth century England and France no less than of Italy. Such pictures as those by the Limbourg brothers in the Duc de Berry's *Book of Hours*, and the fine portrait of Richard II by Beauneveu may remind us that not all the rare painters were Italians, while recent discoveries of thirteenth and fourteenth century wall paintings in English churches suggest future volumes on English art in these centuries similar to the studies of Edouard Mâle for France.

The point I am trying—perhaps I should

say laboring—to make is that the fourteenth century was no more a period of naïve, undisciplined thought and action or of naïve and untrained work in art than is the century in which we live. There was freshness of feeling, there was spontaneity of creation, but they were the freshness and spontaneity belonging, not to the childhood of the race, but to the perennial advent of genius.

In literature the situation was much the same. There were, of course, writers who were mere channels of transmission—eager to retell what they had heard as they had heard it, unreflective, devoid of plastic power, innocent of creative purpose or of theories of composition. But not all were like this. From the eighth century, when Alcuin and Angilbert and their fellows assumed the names and studied and imitated the writings of Virgil and Horace, mediæval writers were for the most part trained in the schools and familiar with the rules and traditions of Roman rhetoric. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio were not the first reflective artists since the close of the Roman period. The *Chanson de Roland* was not composed by a singer who

gave no thought to questions of art. Chrestien de Troyes was no less a sophisticated writer than H. G. Wells or Max Beerbohm. The fault of Guillaume de Machaut and Eustache Deschamps was, not that they lacked rhetorical training, but that they lacked genius. Deschamps himself in 1392 published a treatise on the art of poetry and it was preceded by other treatises of the same nature. Perhaps the most convincing evidence that the poets of the Middle Ages did not lack training is that their verses, even when dull and devoid of human interest, are rarely incorrect in versification. Such slipshod metre and inaccurate rhyming as nowadays make ludicrous the verses of the half-educated are rare indeed in English literature before the fifteenth century, when the mediæval system of education began to break down.

We may take as certain, then, that Chaucer was born into a world in which it was the normal thing for an artist to study his art, to choose between methods and schools, and to reflect upon the purpose of his writing and the best means of securing the effects he de-

sired. His warblings are no more to be described as "native woodnotes wild" than are those of Shakespeare or John Keats.

When Chaucer began to write, there were, it would seem, three schools or methods of writing, among which he might choose. First there was the long established tradition—due originally to French influence, but so ancient that doubtless it was felt to be genuinely English—the form of most of the older saints-legends, scripture paraphrases, romances, of John de Hales' *Luve Rune*, of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, and of the *Debate between the Body and the Soul*. Then there was that new and brilliant school of alliterative poets, just beginning, who in the romance of *William of Palerne*, in the satire of *Piers the Plowman*, in the varied splendors of *Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, *Pearl*, *Patience*, and *Purity*, and in other less notable poems, were attempting a revival of ancient versification. And finally there was the new school in France, of which Guillaume de Machaut was the leader—a school that exalted fixed forms and rules of verse, that reveled in artifice, that stressed the union of music and versification

in the lyric, and that took over from the thirteenth century the allegorical vision as the form and frame for narrative, reflective, and satirical poetry.

Of the three Chaucer chose the last. In this he might have been merely following a fashion at court; but it is noteworthy that he did not follow it unthinkingly. Gower, his contemporary and friend, went with the stream; he wrote his early works in the French language as well as after French models. So, apparently, did others of the court circle, like John de Montacute, earl of Salisbury, another contemporary and perhaps a friend. Of him the author of the French *Metrical History of the Deposition of Richard II* says: "Right well and beautifully also did he make ballades, songs, roundels, and lais," and Christine de Pisan calls him "gracieux chevalier, aimant dictier, et lui même gracieux dicteur."

It was to the school of technique founded by Machaut that all the principal writers of verse in France gave their adherence for more than a century, and it was the technique of this school which, while it was still fresh and

novel, Chaucer deliberately set himself to acquire and to introduce into English poetry. Literary historians often speak loosely as if Chaucer were equally the pupil of Machaut and of Eustache Deschamps, forgetting that Deschamps was not Chaucer's master or predecessor in this technique, but a younger contemporary, and that Chaucer had abandoned the technique of Machaut and begun to practice one that was richer and capable of finer developments when Deschamps was scarcely more than a beginner. There can, however, be no question of Chaucer's indebtedness to Machaut in this early period, both for poetic material and for poetic forms. Chaucer, to be sure, translated the *Roman de la Rose* and was powerfully influenced by it. To the very end of his career, its themes, its most picturesque types, and much of its effective phrasing lingered in his memory and is reflected in his latest and most advanced work; but the influence of the *Roman de la Rose* upon Chaucer is of the same character as its influence upon the new school of writers in France, and with him, as with them, it had

become absorbed into technical processes which were essentially new.

As for Machaut, his greatest contributions to the new technique were three: first, his establishment of the vogue of new poetical forms—ballades, chants royal, rondeaus, lais, virelais, and that elaborate form of narrative verse known as the "dit"; second, the emphasis of music as the accompaniment and control of the form of verse; and third, his establishment of the use of examples drawn from classical literature as a decorative display of erudition. The poetical value of the last feature may well be questioned, but it made an immediate appeal to poets and apparently to readers of that time, and for good or ill must be reckoned with.

Judging from the statements made by Chaucer himself in the *Prologue* of *The Legend of Good Women*, the greater part of his early experiments in the forms made popular by Machaut have disappeared. Queen Alceste, whom the poet represents as defending him against the charges of the God of Love, cites in his defence, not only the *Book of the Duchess*, the *House of Fame*, and

other well-known works, but "many a hymn for the holy days of the God of Love" in the form of "ballades, roundels, and virelays." We can hardly suppose that the large implications of this claim are represented by the almost negligible number of early minor poems which have been preserved to us. Aside from the ballades and roundels—one of each—contained in the *Parlement of Foules* and the *Legend of Good Women*, we have no ballade or roundel which can be confidently attributed to his youth, and there is not a single known specimen of the virelay. Yet there can be no doubt that the technical skill displayed in such poems as the *Book of the Duchess* was achieved only after long and persistent effort toward the acquirement of technique.

Whether in these early exercises in the composition of the forms associated with music—the ballade, the roundel, and the virelay—Chaucer followed the practice of his master, Machaut, and composed also the music for them is a speculation to which no answer can be confidently given. Yet it is not to be forgotten that in the description of the

Squire, who may be supposed to represent in some degree at least the accomplishments which were cultivated by the most sophisticated young men of the time, Chaucer emphasizes the Squire's skill in music as well as in versification:

Singing he was or floytinge all the day;

and

He coudë songës make and wel endyte;

and the marriage of verse to music was the very essence of the new technique.

The thoroughness with which Chaucer mastered the technique of Machaut has been adequately set forth by a long line of scholars from Sandras down to the present day, and it has been well pointed out by some of these scholars, particularly by Kittredge and Lowes, that although he uses the themes and even the phraseology of his French predecessors and compeers, he is not to be regarded as an imitator, but merely as a member of the same group, using materials and a technique that were common possessions of all.

But the most important evidence of conscious reflection in the development of Chaucer's art is furnished, not by his deliberate choice of the French school and his marriage of French technique to English speech, but by those later developments which are known to all but have perhaps not always been rightly understood. His artistic career is commonly divided into three periods: the period of French influence, the period of Italian influence, and the period of independence. These terms, especially the first two, are somewhat unfortunate, in that they imply that Chaucer's artistic development was merely a matter of unthinking imitation, terminating ultimately in an independence that was achieved by accident or by unintentional evolution. This conception seems to me to miss the essential features of Chaucer's artistic career. There was, to be sure, a period during which he wrote in English on the same topics and in the same manner in which the most advanced French poets were writing. It is also true that he became acquainted with the three great Italian masters, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and that from the last two of

these he derived the themes and circumstances of four of his most interesting poems, *The Parlement of Foules*, *Troilus and Crisseyde*, and the tales of *Palamon and Arcite* and of *Griselda*. Parts of these are, in fact, closely translated from their Italian originals, yet in at least two of them, Chaucer has made such changes as result in works entirely new in kind and in effect, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to trace in them anything which can properly be called mere imitation or unthinking assimilation of a foreign technique.

Indeed when one deliberately sums up Chaucer's direct debt to the Italians it is surprisingly small. Petrarch's Latin story of Griselda can hardly count as an Italian debt. Besides this, however, Petrarch is responsible for nothing but the song in the *Troilus* translated from the eighty-eighth sonnet. The great debts to Boccaccio are of course for the material of his *Teseide*, which Chaucer used in various ways, and for the story of *Troilus and Crisseyde*. Other debts are probable—that for the story of the *Franklin's Tale*, for example—but so little has Chaucer been in-

fluenced by the special technique of Boccaccio that excellent scholars have argued against the reality of this debt. The material debt to Dante is admittedly small indeed. The fact is that even when Chaucer translates or retells a tale from one of the great Italians, he does not imitate them. Boccaccio's courtly epic of *La Teseide* becomes the romance of *Palamon and Arcite,* with changed technique and different effects; his amorous romance, *Il Filostrato,* is transformed into a psychological novel; his triple *demande d'amours* submerges its character of ingenious puzzle in the rich humanity of the *Franklin's Tale.*

Yet it is probable that but for the Italians Chaucer would not have become the great artist that he did become. If he did not borrow their technique, he did something vastly better. He developed a technique and manner of his own, and he began to do this very soon after coming into contact with the work of these writers. What apparently happened was that this new body of literature presented to him compositional forms, types of character, situations, motives, methods of description and narration, and an ideal of imagery

and diction entirely different from those to which he was accustomed. To the man of mere talent all this would have meant only a new lot of patterns to learn and imitate. To a genius like Chaucer it opened up endless fields of reflection on the aims and materials and processes of art; and from that time on we find him pursuing his own way, trying out new methods and effects, growing in ease, in wealth of direct observation, in sureness of touch, in subtlety and depth of suggestion, and in vitalizing power.

There is, I think, no detail of composition in which Chaucer's growth as an artist cannot be clearly seen. It may be thought that he deserves little credit for the purity and beauty of his diction. His language, we are told, was the English of the very best social circles of his time and was therefore necessarily elegant, accurate, and forceful. This is, in a sense, true, but he himself deserves some credit even for his choice and use of words. If we possessed a careful study of what may be called the "stylistique" of fourteenth century English—that is, a study of the forms in which thoughts and feelings are commonly

and normally expressed—we should soon see not only the superiority of Chaucer to his contemporaries but also the superiority of his later work to his earlier. Lacking such a study, if we compare him with such a contemporary as Gower—who by no means deserves the harsh words spoken of him by James Russell Lowell—we are struck immediately with the greater modernness, and ease, and clearness of Chaucer's phrasing. And a comparison of the *Boke of the Duchesse* with anything of his own written after his Italian contacts would show the same kinds of superiority in the later work.

Imagery, as Chaucer uses it, is a form of diction. His images are not used for mere decorative purposes, but because they are needed to convey to the reader the idea that lay in Chaucer's mind in the exact form in which he conceived and felt it.

I do not know where this is more abundantly illustrated than in the glowing description of Chaunticleer by the Nuns' Priest:

> In al the land of crowing nas his peer.
> His voice was murier than the murie orgon

On messë dayes that in the chirchë gon. . . .
His comb was redder than the fyn coral
And batailled as it were a castel wal;
His bile was blak and lyk the jet it shoon;
Lyk azure were his leggës and his toon;
His naylës whiter than the lylye flour,
And lyk the burnëd gold was his colour.

But it is found everywhere in Chaucer's later work and its astonishing abundance there suggests that it is the result of a distinct change in methods of artistry—a change which if studied with care and applied with discretion might serve to date some of the poems about which there is still controversy.

This amazing skill in the use of imagery lies at the basis of some of his most brilliant portraits, for example, those of the principal figures in the tales of the Miller and the Reeve—portraits in every way equal to the best of those in the *Prologue.* So in the opening lines describing the Carpenter's young wife:

Fair was this yongë wyf, and therwithal
As any wezele, her body gent and smal.
A ceynt she werede, y-barrëd al of silk;

A barmë-clooth as whit as mornë milk
Upon hir lendës, ful of many a goore.

And later:

Ful smale y-pullëd were hir browës two,
And tho were bent and blak as any slo.
She was ful moorë blisful on to see
Than is the newë perëjonette tree
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.

Again:

Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth
Or hoord of apples, leyd in hey or heeth.

So also in the picture of Absolon, the amorous parish clerk:

Crul was his heer and as the gold it shoon
And strouted as a fanne, large and brode,
. . . his eyen greye as goos;
With Powles window corven on his shoos.

Closely related to the mastery of imagery is the power of selecting characteristic and suggestive detail. Of this we need not go far to find abundant examples. The room of the university student Nicholas may serve:

His Almageste and bookës grete and smale,
His astrelabie, longynge for his art,
His augrym stonës layen faire apart,
On shelvës couchëd at his beddës heed;
His presse y-covered with a faldyng reed.
And al above ther lay a gay sautrie
On which he made a-nyghtës melodie
So swetëly that al the chambre rong;
And "Angelus ad virginem" he song.

A classic instance is that in the *Summoner's Tale,* when the Friar enters the house of the bedridden Thomas and immediately makes himself at home:

And fro the benche he droof away the cat,
And leyde adowne his potente and his hat,
And eke his scrippe, and sette him softe adoun.

But all this, someone may object, is the fruit, not of art, but of native ability. That art alone cannot achieve such effects may be granted; but exquisitely adapted to the purpose in hand, as they are in Chaucer, and never overdone or come tardy of, they are equally beyond the scope of an untrained and unreflective talent.

This topic might easily be further elaborated and illustrated from the later of the *Canterbury Tales*, but I prefer to pass on to two matters in which Chaucer remained for centuries without a rival and remains even yet without a superior. The first of these is the creation of atmosphere and tone; the second, the portrayal of character.

In speaking of the first of these, the example that will most readily present itself to every student of Chaucer is the opening of the *Pardoner's Tale*—a tale which is in so many ways representative of Chaucer's artistic best. Numerous other versions of the story exist, as everyone knows. They tell, with more or less variation, some such tale as this: "Three villains find a huge treasure. One of them is sent to a neighboring town to buy food and drink to sustain them all till they can carry the treasure to a safe place. The two who remain to guard it plot to kill their fellow on his return and divide his share between them; and they carry out their plan. But he in turn, to get the whole treasure for himself, had poisoned the food and drink he brought; and they die of the poison while re-

joicing over their success in putting him out of the way." A tragic tale, but not in any of the other versions one to be greatly admired or long remembered. Chaucer's version, on the other hand, is one of the world's masterpieces—possessing every quality of the ideal short-story centuries before that type of fiction was recognized and defined. How did he work this miracle of transformation? Partly, of course, by simple skill in clear, rapid, vivid narration; partly by presenting the three villains to us in such a way that we know them as well as if we had seen them with our own eyes; but mainly by the creation of atmosphere and tone. First, for the indefinite or insignificant setting of the tale in other versions he substitutes a tavern in Flanders where drunken revelers sit cursing and blaspheming as the Black Death slays its thousands. Against this terrible background the sordid tale of drunkenness, foul speech, avarice, and treacherous murder is unfolded. These features alone give the tale an intensity and impressiveness attained again only once in the next two hundred years—and then not in English but in the lowland

Scotch of Robert Henryson's amazing picture of the meeting of Troilus and the abject figure of her who once was Cressida. But Chaucer has not yet withdrawn his hand from his tale of the three sodden wretches. The way to their doom is pointed out to them by one who remains perhaps the most tragic and mysterious figure ever created in an equal number of lines in any literature. And from the moment of his appearance the already tremendous theme sweeps to its fulfilment with all the majestic and uncanny terrors of doom.

Except in the opening scene of *Macbeth* I do not know where in English literature you will find a tragic theme announced and a tragic atmosphere created in so brief a space as in the first twenty lines of the *Pardoner's Tale*, or what beings but the witches of that scene can match in mysterious suggestiveness the old cherl who points these drunken revellers to the abode of Death.

Of Chaucer's methods of character portrayal much might be said. And first, that they are many and various. If there is any method known to the modern novelist or

short-story writer that he did not use I have failed to note it. Direct description and statement are used by him with a skill that has not been surpassed—as, for example, in the portraits of the Canterbury pilgrims. Self revelation, whether in the garrulous narrative of the Wife of Bath or in the shy confessions of Cressida, unites with psychological analysis to give us pages comparable to the best in *Clarissa Harlowe*. Characterization by significant speech, action, and manner was, I believe, a new thing in English literature, but it appears here in full perfection. The Host says a few words to the Nun's Priest and he replies in two lines, and we know him almost as well as if Chaucer had not neglected to paint his portrait in the *Prologue*. In the *Summoner's Tale* the Friar greets the sick yeoman, drives away the cat from the most comfortable seat, kisses the good wife, enumerates the trifles he would like for dinner, tells a few pious lies about the doings of his convent—and we know him as well as if we had been present at the interview.

Not less remarkable than the range and variety of means by which Chaucer presents

his characters is the skill with which he adapts the degree and amount of characterization to the purpose in hand. Cressida and Pandarus are drawn in elaborate detail. We know them intimately. We follow their every action, read their motives, understand the stream of thought and feeling that courses through them. Equally detailed, though within narrower limits, are the studies of the Carpenter in the *Miller's Tale* and the Friar in the *Summoner's Tale*. Vivid and real but only slightly sketched, because no more is needed, are the Carpenter's wife, Nicholas the student, Absolon the parish clerk, and Thomas the sick yeoman. Consummate as was Chaucer's mastery, facile as was his pen, he seems never to draw portraits merely for the pleasure of drawing them or for the exploitation of his skill, but always with strict reference to the requirements of his art.

The basis of this fertility as well as of the vitality of the pictures was an inexhaustible store of observations of men, and women, and animals—as they lived and loved, and fought, and cheated, and carried on all the manifold activities of life. If this wealth of

detailed observation were less, one might conceivably be tempted to listen more favorably to Professor Curry's attempts to show that in drawing his characters Chaucer consulted his books on physiology and astrology. But the man whose quiet, humorous eyes had seen as much of men and things as Chaucer's had did not need the aid of astrology to visualize the Wife of Bath or of physiology and medicine to depict the Summoner. He had seen them in the flesh, in their habit as they lived and acted and talked, just as he had seen the Host, and the Monk, and the Squire, and the Lady Prioress, and the Carpenter's wife and the Miller's wife and daughter. That he used the terms and conceptions of astrology and physiology to set some of his characters before his public—to "conveyen his matere," as he himself would have said—admits of no doubt, and we are greatly indebted to Professor Curry for the industry and learning with which he has illustrated Chaucer's pigments, but the wise man rules the stars—"Sapiens dominabitur astris"—and Chaucer was one of the wise. Chaucer did not examine the horoscope of the Wife of Bath

until after he had endowed her with all her qualities of body and of mind, and his diagnosis of the Summoner's ailments was the result, not the cause, of them.

Finally, the most astonishing characteristic of Chaucer's art is that which has been emphasized by everyone who has studied his work; that is, what is commonly called the dramatic method. This appears not only in his presentation of character and his technique of narration, but is the very basis of his success as a satirist. Other satirists of the time in both England and France—the *Piers the Plowman* poets, Eustache Deschamps, and even the despised Gower—are richer than he in satiric material, and some of them utter indictments of the abuses and follies of the time which could hardly be excelled for clearness, power, and eloquence. But all of them declaim and indict and sermonize. Only now and then do we get from them passages which enable us, as Chaucer always enables us, to look in upon a scene of folly, or vice, or corruption, and form our own opinion. A few such scenes stand out in the A-text of *Piers the Plowman*, like the famous tavern scene

in the confession of Gluttony. Gower, in his much neglected *Miroir de l'Omme,* also has a few, that would linger unforgettably in the memory if they were not buried in a mass of vituperation and preaching. But this method of opening a window upon life and letting the reader see the persons and events of the writer's vision is habitual with Chaucer. And this is the reason why his satire is so convincing. He does not argue, and there is no temptation to refute him. He does not declaim, and there is no opportunity for reply. He merely lets us see his fools and rascals in their native foolishness and rascality, and we necessarily think of them as he would have us think.

This of course is the triumph of the creative imagination and of constructive art. And it is in these qualities that Chaucer is supreme. All other satirists of the fourteenth century give us the materials from which imagination may, if it can, reconstruct the life of the time. Chaucer displays that life with all the solidity and colors of reality, and the men and women of his world are as vivid and familiar as those whom we see daily with our own eyes.

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